



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

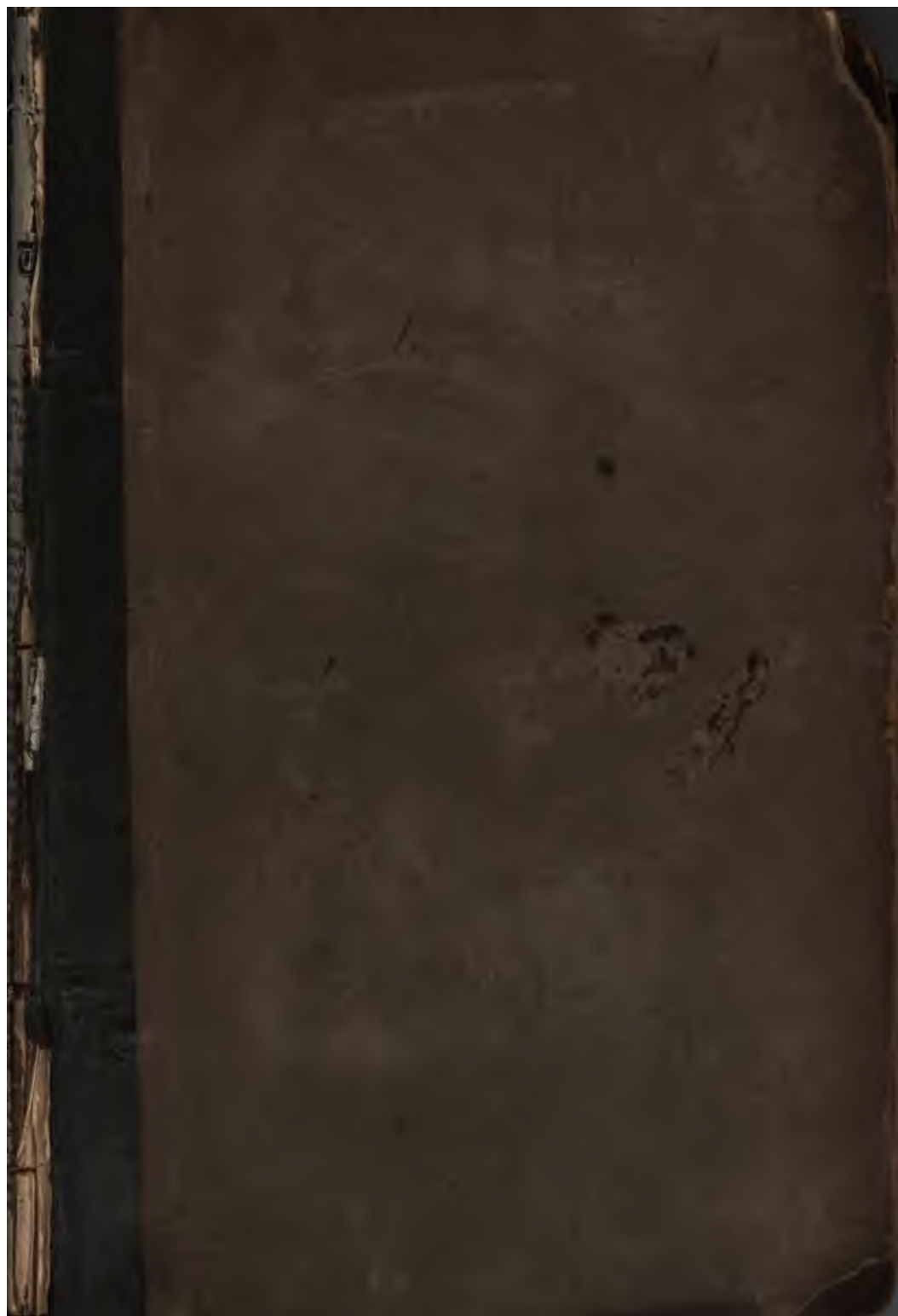
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

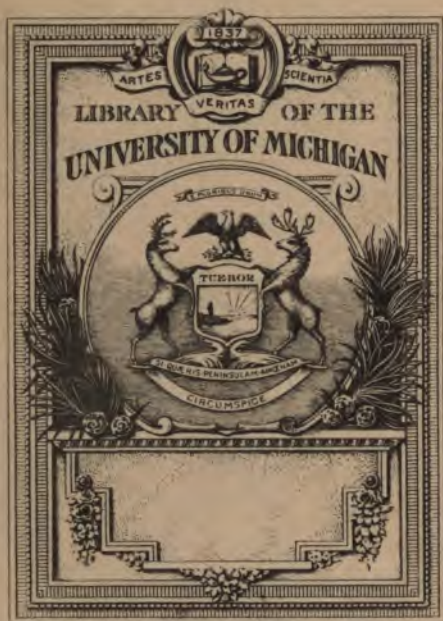
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



96



---

F  
2131  
.M18





A  
**TWELVEMONTH'S RESIDENCE**

IN THE

**WEST INDIES,**

DURING THE TRANSITION FROM

**SLAVERY TO APPRENTICESHIP;**

WITH INCIDENTAL NOTICES OF THE STATE OF SOCIETY,  
PROSPECTS, AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF  
JAMAICA AND OTHER ISLANDS.

BY **R. R. MADDEN, M. D.**

AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN THE EAST," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

**VOL. II.**

LONDON:  
**JAMES COCHRANE AND**

WATERLOO PLACE.

**1835.**

24

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY,  
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.



Hist. Southern  
Grant  
11-28-25  
12152

CONTENTS  
OF  
THE SECOND VOLUME.

---

LETTER XXII.

TO DR. RICHARDSON.

Celebration of the first of August—Conduct of the negroes—Churches thronged—Exertions of the dissenting ministers—Their general success in the colony—Juvenile jubilee—A dignity ball—Juno and Wilberforce—Cupid and Quashaba—Horace and Mrs. Mackaroo—Wellington and Weenus, &c. . . . . page 1

LETTER XXIII.

TO MRS. HOLLAND.

The drama—Kingston theatricals—Romeo and Juliet—Jews and Gentiles—Spendid jewellery and a fashionable audience—Romeo poisoned in earnest—Origin of Kingston—Republican settlers—Smollett, Wolcot, Mr. G. Lewis, and Tom Cringle's heroes—The companion of Bolivar's fortunes—Madame Emanuele—Singular person—Anecdotes of Bolivar—Attempt to assassinate him—

Murder of his commissary—Comparative merits of Bolivar, Buonaparte, and Washington—Execution of Spanish pirates—Water-fall near Kingston—Sites of ancient Spanish towns . . . . . *page 9*

#### LETTER XXIV.

TO W. F. STUART, ESQ.

Absentees, embarrassments of—Mr. G. Lewis's visit to his estates—Their retrieval—His opinion of his overseers—Conduct of his negroes—General evils of attorneyship management . . . . . 29

#### LETTER XXV.

TO DR. JAMES JOHNSON.

Soil of Jamaica—Mountain lands—Principal formations—Heights of mountains—Dr. M'Fadgyen's botanical pursuits—Fruit-trees—Valuable plants—New cultures recommended—Revival and decline of the cultivation of indigo, cotton, and cacao—Effects of heavy duties on these—Efficacy of free labour—Negro industry—Forests of Jamaica . . . . . 43

#### LETTER XXVI.

TO DR. WEBSTER.

Various poisonous plants of the West Indies and adjoining continent—Bites of serpents—Action and nature of venom—Antidotes—Poisonous fish—Negro practice of dirt-eating—Cassava . . . . . 72

#### LETTER XXVII.

TO DR. WEBSTER.

Obeah—Nature, origin, and effects of capital punishments—Negro superstitions—African oaths—Case of obeahing—

Confession—Dr. Maglashan an upright and impartial local magistrate—The book ordeal—The broom ordeal—Improvements in the slave law—Difficulty of obtaining justice for the negro where defendant is a white man . . . . . *page 93*

## LETTER XXVIII.

TO MONSIEUR JULIEN.

Origin of slavery in our colonies—Its condition in the French islands—Its charters and legal supports—Columbus a strenuous advocate for slavery—Exemplary conduct of the Queen Isabella—Catholic missionaries the first opponents of slavery—Atrocities of Sir John Hawkins—Number of French vessels in the slave-trade—Feudal slavery in England—Various kinds of—Disposal of British slaves in Ireland—Abolition of slavery by the Roman Catholic Council of Armagh—Lord Stowel's opinion of slavery—Lord Mansfield's and Lord Eldon's—Remarks on . . . . . 112

## LETTER XXIX.

TO THE COUNT D'ORSAY.

Police-office reports—Ludicrous scenes—Negro correspondence—Specimens of negro fabrication and quibbling—Many cases not of a ludicrous character—Urgent necessity for the late change . . . . . 138

## LETTER XXX.

TO J. BUCKINGHAM, ESQ. M. P.

"Sacred rights"—A Timbuctoo negro of a noble family—An excellent Arabic scholar—Mental capacity—

Picture of the slave-trade—Rev. Mr. Brydges's advocacy of slavery on religious grounds—Answer to—First curse of slavery—Jewish value of slaves—A father claiming his own son for his apprentice—The son the slave-owner of his own mother—Demanding wages from his own sister—"Sacred rights"—Restitution of Nature's rights, *page* 157

### LETTER XXXI.

TO J. BUCKINGHAM, ESQ. M. P.

The scherriffe of Timbuctoo—Application for his liberty  
—The manumission—His history . . . 177

### LETTER XXXII.

TO DR. WILLIAM BEATTIE.

Mental capacity of negroes—Letters from negroes—  
Letter from negroes respecting their creed—Author's  
reply . . . 191

### LETTER XXXIII.

TO J. HAMILTON, ESQ.

Price of Liberty—Valuation clause—Usual award—  
Value of condemned negroes . . . 216

### LETTER XXXIV.

TO MAJOR HOPKINS.

Estate management—Supplies—Expenses—Returns  
—Ruinous system of management for proprietors—Ex-  
cessive labour under the old system—Revival of colonial  
prosperity . . . 227

## LETTER XXXV.

## TO MONSIEUR JULIEN.

Working of the apprenticeship system in Jamaica—  
 Early condition of negroes—Evidences of contented state  
 of negroes—List of the principal rebellions—Rebellion of  
 1832—Cause of—Cost of subduing it—Exculpation of  
 missionaries—The new Act, 1834—Preparations for its  
 operation—Progress and prospects of—Difficulties it has  
 to encounter—Cause of—Deaths and resignations of  
 special magistrates—Stoppage of customary supplies—  
 Mr. Batty's new Acts—House of Assembly . *page* 244

## LETTER XXXVI.

## TO MONSIEUR JULIEN.

Working of Abolition Bill continued—Present oppo-  
 sition to it—Local magistracy—Overseers—Constitution of  
 courts of law—Outrages on negroes since the 1st of August  
 —Dismissal of a Colonel of militia—Gratitude of negroes  
 —Opposition of the Kingston corporation to new measure  
 —Judicial proceedings against negroes—Conduct of a  
 corporation magistrate—Assault on special magistrate—  
 Objections to the present system—Proposal for its abo-  
 lition . . . . . 286



## APPENDIX.

Cause of resignation—Testimonials from the Marquis of Sligo, the Chief-Justice, the Attorney-General, and the Earl of Mulgrave . . . . . *page* 321

---

A correspondent from a lunatic asylum—The person immured for his political opinions—His application for his liberation—The hardship of his case—His writings—His song on liberty . . . . . 327

---

Yellow fever—General opinion of its nature and treatment—Question of its being contagious—Influenced by local circumstances, climate, &c. . . . . 331

---

Slavery in America—Colonization Society—Scene in Baltimore—A new version of "Hail Columbia! happy land!" . . . . . 340

TWELVE MONTHS  
IN  
THE WEST INDIES.

---

LETTER XXII.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE  
FIRST OF AUGUST.

---

TO DR. RICHARDSON.

Kingston, August 6, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Events that have been long anticipated are generally stript of their importance by the time of their occurrence ; like those structures we have seen, whose wondrous magnitude has been so long the theme of admiration, that, when we gaze on them at last, we find our astonishment surpassed by our expectations. In all the events, political or otherwise, that man looks forward to ; in all the marvels of art or nature, that his enthusiasm pauses at the sight of, for the fruition of his preconceived enjoy-

ment, "blessed indeed is he who expects least, for he shall not be disappointed."


From the day the Abolition Bill was passed, the 1st of August was looked forward to with intense interest; with extravagant hopes by one party, and groundless apprehensions by the other. The Ides of August, however, are come,—and, what is more, they are passed, and not a single riot occurred throughout the island, and not a single man, woman, or child, was butchered to make a negro holiday. This conduct of the great unchained was very provoking, to be sure; for a great many prophecies were to be fulfilled on the 1st of August, "or thereabouts," as Mr. Moore would say: but, somehow or another, the predictions have not been accomplished; and, unfortunately for the prophetic character of the Cobbetts of Jamaica, they are never likely to be accomplished. The House of Assembly judiciously decided that the 1st of August should be a holiday, and the negroes were recommended to observe it as a day of prayer and thanksgiving. All the sectarian places of worship were accordingly thrown open, and they were thronged with the negroes to an unprecedented extent; but I regret to say that, for some reasons which to me are unknown, divine service was not performed in the Protestant churches in this town. In a former work, I have spoken unfavourably of the success attending the labours of the sectarian

---

missionaries in the Levant; and I certainly was disposed to think, before my arrival here, that the accounts of the success attending their exertions were likely to be greatly exaggerated, but the experience of many months has led me to form a different opinion. I do not belong to their communion; and, moreover, I do not think that the intellectual condition of the negroes has been improved to the extent which might be desired, though perhaps not expected, under the difficulties the sectarian clergy have had to contend with. But I cannot shut my eyes against the light of facts that may not be resisted. It is evident to every one, that the moral condition of the negro is improved, and that the improvement is mainly to be attributed to the labours of the dissenting missionaries. I should think two-thirds of the negroes who attend places of worship are either Methodists or Baptists. There are six large Methodist and Baptist chapels in Kingston, two Protestant churches, two Roman Catholic, and one Presbyterian; but, in the two latter, the negro part of the congregations is extremely small. In the larger Protestant church, the aisle is generally crowded with negroes; but in St. George's Church I do not think I have ever seen fifty negroes at any one time. I by no means attribute the preference that the negroes give to the sectarian chapels, to any want of zeal or assiduity on the part of the clergy of the Established

Church,—but, in a great measure, to the entire attention that is given by the clergy of the former to the mode of adapting their instruction to the capacity of the negroes ; while in the Protestant church, where the majority of the congregation consists of white people, the clergyman must adapt his language and delivery to one class only. There is another circumstance that has a great influence on the preference I speak of: the accommodation of the negro in the sectarian chapel is as carefully attended to as that of the white man in the Protestant church ; and perhaps, of all the adventitious circumstances which enlist the senses on the side of religion, there is none that has greater influence on the devotion of the negro than that of sacred music,—a fact which the sectarians are well aware of, and have evinced their knowledge of, in their selection of simple tunes and familiar language for the hymns they teach the negroes. They are paid by their congregations by weekly contributions, from threepence to sixpence sterling for each person. But I need not say the clergy of any church are not likely to throw impediments in the way of any of its members who are disposed to be more liberal to their pastors than the majority of the congregation.

The annual charge of the Established Church in this island is £19,719 currency. The salary of the bishop is £4000 sterling, and the archdeacon



£2000, but I am not sure whether in currency or sterling.

I visited three of the sectarian chapels on the 1st of August, during the morning, mid-day, and evening service ; and I was greatly gratified at the pains that were taken to make the negroes sensible of the nature of the change that had taken place in their condition, and the great benefits they had to show their gratitude for, under Him who had brought them out of bondage, to their benefactors both at home and in England, who expected of them to be good christians, good citizens, and good servants. Indeed, in all the sectarian churches I have visited in different parishes, I have never heard other advice given than that which was favourable to the maintenance of industry and obedience ; and if I was to particularise any sectarian instructor whose constant endeavours were directed to the public advantage, as well as to the moral improvement of his flock, I might name a poor negro preacher of the Baptist persuasion—" Parson Kellick," as the negroes call him, who officiates in a spacious chapel nearly opposite my present abode.

The 1st of August passed over without the slightest disorder. I did not see a single drunken negro, nor any great appearance of exultation, except that which in the subdued form of grateful piety I witnessed in the churches.

In fact, for a great festival, it was as quiet a day as can be well imagined. The only symptoms I saw of turbulent joy was on the part of some negro urchins, who were throwing stones at a drunken sailor, and who, whenever poor Jack made a reel after them, scampered away, shouting most lustily to each other, "What for you run away? we all free now! buckra can't catch we! hurra for fuss of Augus! hi, hi, fuss of Augus! hurra for fuss of Augus!" Then the young *élite* of the liberated blacks would courageously wheel round and give poor Jack another volley of pebbles, and cut all manner of ridiculous capers before him. This was the only emanation of the great spirit that had just walked abroad, that I happened to get a glimpse of.

There was a large dinner, however, of negroes and of free-coloured people in Kingston, at which there was no dearth of negro eloquence after the removal of the cloth.

But on the north side of the island the sable exclusives got up some dignity balls on an extensive scale, to one of which the lady patronesses invited Sir Ames Norcott and the officers of his staff; and the worthy General, who has no need of haughtiness for the maintenance of that respect which his character commands, I am told attended one of the Almacks that is really in the west.

The letter which did the office of the Morning



Post, describes the party as being numerous attended, and breaking up at a late hour ; and omitted not to state that nothing could exceed the urbanity of the lady patronesses, and the indefatigable exertions of the Sambo stewards. Miss Quashaba, belonging to Mr. C—, led off with Mr. Cupid belonging to Mr. M—, while Mrs. Juno, belonging to Mr. P—, received the blacks and buckras. But as there are no more slaves to be registered, I will dispense with the owners. Mr. Wilberforce danced with all his might and main with Miss Whaunica ; Horace tripped it on the light fantastic toe with Mrs. Mackaroo ; while Mr. Mangrove thumped it on the long projecting heel with Miss Diana Pullfoot. The harmony of the evening was only once disturbed by Mr. Quacco, a coppersmith, intimating to Wellington, a free tailor, that he was a dam black neger for putting his arm by accident round the waist of his partner, Mrs. Weenus ; but as the miss-take of property was nothing else, and could be nothing but a mistake, the intimation and the apology were only made in a whisper : so the dancing was resumed, and one of Hart's best-known quadrilles was done great justice to on a bonjoo and a gombah, the violoncello and kettle-drum of the negro orchestra. On the whole, there never was such a twinkling of black feet in Jamaica as the night of the 1st of August in Montego Bay : it



seemed as if the Abolition Bill had made the limbs of the dark-complexioned ladies and gentlemen as lively as their hearts ; and there was no end to the pleasure and perspiration of the evening, till the head of the gombah was fairly beaten in, and the last string of the bonjoo was scraped to pieces.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

R. R. M.



## LETTER XXIII.

THE LIONS OF KINGSTON.

---

TO MRS. HOLLAND.

Kingston, August 1834.

My dear Madam,

When it pleases the Jews to execute the drama, the poor victim to the injured laws of histrionic art is led forth before the eyes of the Hebrew multitude, (literally, in the place of public execution,) and, after various mutilations and unheard-of cruelties, that most unfortunate man, Mr. William Shakspeare, undergoes the extreme penalty of a representation of his plays in Kingston. Figure to yourself Romeo and Juliet in the agonies of such a representation—the most sentimental of lovers in the hands of a strapping Hebrew store-keeper—and the beautiful Juliet enacted by a lubberly Jew-boy from a linen-drapery establishment: fancy the awful strides of Capulet's daughter in the garden scene: imagine the terrific

screams in the balcony, Romeo swearing like a trooper of Mantua by the

“Blessed moon,  
That tips with silver all the fruit-tree tops—”


that he is desperately in love; while the gentle Juliet, whose petticoats are rather too scanty to conceal the peeping extremities of a pair of Russia-duck inexpressibles, is straining her cracked voice

“To lure her tassel-gentle back again.”

But Romeo in all probability is swigging some last-imported London particular at the wing, and can hardly be brought to time, while

“Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;  
Else would she tear the cave where echo lies,  
And make her airy tongues more hoarse than hers,  
With repetition of her Romeo’s name.”

As it is, however, she manages to “split the ears of the groundlings,” and to inform the real “Black Orangemen” and women outside the walls “how silver sweet sound lovers’ tongues by night;” while the genuine black-guards from the adjoining barracks in the gallery are struck all of a heap at the idea of cutting up the poor fat buckra, in the tight hose, into little stars, and converting his grease into tallow candles,—which is the only way they can imagine of making the heavens look more bright by means of Buckra’s fatness.



On Saturday night the theatre is generally open in the cooler months: the lower tier of boxes is filled with the beauty and fashion of Israel in Kingston; and some wondrous pretty women there are too among the daughters of Zion in Jamaica, whose black, brilliant, oriental eyes possess the power of transfixing those on whom they chance to fall. No "stoney limits can hold love out," where so much beauty is often assembled in one small box. Excellent Stilton-cheese and admirable salt-butter may be purchased in the morning of some of the fashionables, who are "the observed of all observers" in this same theatre in the evening; but what signifies Stilton cheese and salt butter in comparison with the diamonds and pearls, and precious stones, and trinkets of gold and silver, which glare and sparkle in the front row of the dress-circle. There is one of the performers who plays melodramatic characters with a considerable degree of talent. A passion for theatricals unfortunately induced him to assume the sock and buskin; he got tired of the stage, and, getting tired of the stage, he got tired of his life and swallowed poison. To make assurance doubly sure, he dissolved a large quantity of an active poison in a very powerful menstruum; and, as a matter of course, having said, like Romeo, "Here's to my love," he drank the potion. But the deuce of the matter was—the menstruum was so nauseous,

—the poison would not stay down : a medical man was sent for in great haste : the poor actor was said to be in the agonies of death : the doctor found him in a very perilous situation, but still entertained some hopes of his recovery. In the midst of this unpleasant scene, a brother actor of his entered the room in the slow and measured step of theatrical affliction, with one dusky finger pressed on his left temple, and a whole big hand expanded over the region of the heart : he walked towards the doctor, “ This is a sad business, sir,” said the doctor.—“ Awful, sir !” responded the actor, in a tragic tone that one might expect to issue from the ghost of Talma—“ very awful indeed !” He approached the bed-side of the poor gentleman. “ Ah, my friend,” he exclaimed, “ is it come to this ? Is it thus I see you ? The play for Saturday announced but yesterday your name in the bills, and no chance of your appearance !”

The poor gentleman, however, ultimately recovered, and is at present the only tolerable actor of the *corps dramatique* of this island. The actors are not always the only performers at this theatre, for the rising generation of the Hebrews sometimes perform pugilistic exploits. A scene of this kind lately occurred, which relieved the actors on the stage a good deal ; for, as the attention of an audience cannot be directed two ways at once,

however good the performance, it invariably turns from the stage to the scene of action in front of it.

A country of which our earliest knowledge is only of a date of 340 years, can possess no other than very modern antiquities ; but few even of these are to be found in Jamaica. Kingston was only built after the destruction of Port-Royal 142 years ago ; consequently, no Spanish remains are to be found here, and indeed there are very few in any part of the island. Perhaps the objects of most interest, and of the greatest antiquity at present to be sought after, are the tombs and remains of the habitations of some of those republicans who took an active part in the downfall of the unfortunate Charles, and who fled here at the time of the Restoration. At that period, vast numbers of the prescribed republicans took refuge in Jamaica ; and there is no doubt the spirit of liberty, the impatience of all control exercised by the authority of the mother country, and even the turbulent independence which has influenced the character of the colonial legislature, are to be attributed to the principles which the early republicans carried with them to this island. Among the partisans of Cromwell who fled here at his death, there were several of the regicides : Wait and Blagrove, two of the King's judges ; the children of General Harrison ; the son of Scott,

from whose daughter the great proprietor Beckford was descended: the son of the President Bradshaw was also among the number of the republican settlers, but he appears to have arrived here prior to Cromwell's death. Colonel Humphrey, whose father had borne the sword before Bradshaw at the trial of the King, held a high military command here.

Of persons who have signalised themselves in more peaceable pursuits, the names of very few are associated with colonial recollections. Kingston has been the residence of about half-a-dozen persons who subsequently distinguished themselves in literature and science: Smollett, Walcott, Lewis, Long, Brown, and Edwards have been residents of Jamaica at different periods, and some of them sojourners at Kingston. But I ought not to omit among its literary visitants the talented author of the "Life of a Sailor;" nor the able author of "Tom Cringle" among its former residents, who has not chosen to divulge his name, and which I shall not presume to do, though it is tolerably well known to this community, and very generally respected by it; but in stating that he is neither an Englishman nor an Irishman, a sailor nor a soldier, I trust I am only lifting a very little corner of the veil of his mystery.\*

\* If Tom were now to visit Jamaica, it would grieve his kind heart (for that he is a kind-hearted man, every

---

The house in which Smollett lodged in Kingston is still in existence, in Harbour Street, and is

reader of his must be persuaded) to find how few of those of his hospitable companions, whom he has made his heroes, are now in existence,—and how few of those who remain are in the prosperous circumstances in which he left them. The judge who never went to dinner without his ice-saw, has been gathered to his fathers; but “the one-handed Scotchman,” who surmounted the objection to his costume at the door of the ball-room by converting his long trousers into knee-breeches, without the aid of his tailor, is still as vigorous and as genuinely Scotch as ever.

Eschylus Stave still flourishes in Kingston, and time has not impaired his powers of elocution: the gentleman who broke his arm in the exploits after dinner is sobered down to a quiet convivialist, the best-humoured man that ever was incurably argumentative. Old Steady in the west is just as imperturbable in the serenity of his nature as the day he was burned out of the ship that was conveying him to Kingston; while the facetious Aaron Bang, at one time the Mercutio, and at another the Tristram Shandy of the novel, has merged into an elderly gentleman, the mercurialism of whose character is hardly to be recognised in the demure tranquillity of a pains-taking attorney.

But the hand of time does not travel over the dial of human nature for a period of a dozen years, without affecting the elasticity of the spring which sets its machinery in motion; and that period has elapsed since the buoyant spirits of the planter of St. Thomas in the Vale furnished materials for the description of Aaron Bang’s whimsicalities. It is not every Yorick, however, like Aaron Bang, who has been “a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy,”—whose jibes, and gambols, and flashes of merri-



now occupied by a tailor, next door to Mr. Threadway's. I am told by that gentleman's nephew, that an old negro woman, who had lived in the house a very long time, and has been dead only a few years, remembered Smollett. She must have been of a very great age, for it is upwards of eighty years ago since Smollett was in Jamaica. He served as a cabin-boy in 1743, at the action of Porto Cavallo, under Admiral Knowles,—the same person who afterwards became Governor of Jamaica, in 1751. Smollett was subsequently made surgeon's-mate, and must have been for a considerable time on the West India station. Knowles returned to England in 1756, and shortly afterwards prosecuted Smollett for a libel; for which offence he was fined, and imprisoned in the Marshalsea.

A house nearly opposite that in which Smollett resided, I am informed, was the residence, for a short time, of Dr. Walcott, the celebrated Peter Pindar. Walcott was brought up to the medical profession under a country apothecary. In 1767 he accompanied Sir William Trelawney, the newly-appointed Governor, to Jamaica, as medical attendant: in a short time, however, he changed the medical for the clerical profession, and officiated "were wont to set the table in a roar,"—who becomes estimable for his worth when he has ceased to be remarkable for his jocularities.

ciated in his new calling for some time in the parish of Vere. Walcott was not in orders when he left England, nor did he return to England to be ordained, previously to his procuring his clerical appointment. There was no bishop at that period in the West Indies; and how he became qualified for the clerical profession, I do not know. But he did not long remain in Jamaica; and it appears his ministry was not satisfactory to his parishioners.

There is a Spanish lady now living here,—a Madame Emanuele, the wife, or at least the companion, of Bolivar in all his latter fortunes. This lady is now of middle age, commanding in her person, of considerable intellectual powers, and of an undaunted spirit. She is the Lady H——r S——e of this country: her saloon is decorated with swords and pistols of various fashions; and she has even done some good service with them. At Bolivar's death she was exiled from the country, so great were the fears of her influence over the people. She lives here in almost total seclusion;—few, if any, Englishmen know there is such a person sojourning in Kingston. On several occasions, the intrepidity and presence of mind of Madame Emanuele rescued Bolivar from situations of the most imminent hazard.

In the last revolutionary conspiracies against the life of this great man at Bogota, he owed his

preservation entirely to her. He had retired one night to rest earlier than usual: Madame Emanuele heard some noise under the windows, the report of fire-arms, and, shortly after, cries of "*Muerto al tiranno! Muerto al tiranno!*" She immediately apprised Bolivar of his danger; and, to prevent his getting at his arms, which she knew if he once did he would rush into the midst of the assassins who were seeking him, she extinguished the light; and, throwing open the window, which looked upon the garden, she literally forced him to escape by the only exit that was left him. She had hardly closed the window when the assassins were at the door: they had already murdered the three sentinels, and Colonel Ferguson, the general's aid-de-camp, whom they shot dead on the steps of the portico. Madame Emanuele seated herself in the middle of the bed-chamber, with folded arms, awaiting the demolition of the door, which they were now proceeding with, in consequence of her refusal to admit them.

When the ruffians burst into the room, a dozen daggers were instantly gleaming over the bed where they imagined Bolivar was concealed. Madame Emanuele,—whose only object was to give time to the General to make good his retreat,—without ever moving from her position, or evincing the least emotion, informed the assassins the General was still writing in his closet at the top of the

house, where he was in the habit of spending the greater part of his nights in reading and writing, when he had much to engage him. They immediately proceeded to the closet: from that room she conducted them to various other apartments; and finally, when she judged the fugitive had sufficient time to be beyond reach of pursuit, she returned to her apartment, with that bearing of female fearlessness which ferocity itself can never outrage. The disappointed conspirators, after destroying some of the papers of the General, were preparing to decamp, when the regiment of Major Whittle made its appearance at the palace, (Major Whittle having, by the greatest accident, heard of the insurrection on his return from a party,) and, after a desperate resistance, the insurgents were subdued, and the majority of those who were still in the palace were taken.

When the revolution commenced, Bolivar was one of the wealthiest proprietors of the country. When he was first pressed to place himself at the head of the insurgents, he refused to join them; but it was not long before he saw the necessity of yielding to renewed solicitation: and when he did draw the sword of revolt, he threw away the scabbard. His first act was to sacrifice *property* to the extent of forty thousand pounds. He possessed seven hundred slaves, and he gave them all their liberty. He formed a regiment of

the liberated negroes ; and this regiment proved highly serviceable in the course of the revolutionary war. What was the conduct of Washington in similar circumstances ? At the outbreak of the American revolution he possessed one hundred slaves,—did he devote their services to the cause of his country ? did he liberate his slaves to give liberty the hearts of a hundred new defenders ? Far from it,—Washington clung to his *property*, while he had life to enjoy the advantages of slavery : it was only at his death his slaves obtained their freedom. The character of Bolivar has never yet been done justice to,—it remains for after-times to vindicate his memory, and to atone for the baseness of the country which twice drove him from its shores. It was on one of these occasions, at his return from his exile, that the same senate which clamoured for his blood received him with unheard-of honours. The senators made speeches, in which the exploits of Achilles, and the achievements of Alexander, were as straws in the balance against the wondrous deeds of Bolivar.

Bolivar listened in silence, I am informed by an eye-witness of the scene, to the eulogiums of the fulsome parasites, who followed the changes of the fickle multitude ; and when a death-like stillness at length prevailed in the Assembly, and every ear was turned to catch the words of the



Liberator, (for it was an occasion on which it was expected he would enter into the subject of the revolution, and narrate the events which led to its fortunate termination,) Bolivar—at that time a pale, care-worn, grave-looking person, older in appearance than in reality, and dressed in the plainest attire—rose up and addressed the senate in these emphatic words :—

“My countrymen, when I joined the revolution, I was young and rich—it has terminated, and I have gained my object, though it has left me old and poor.”\*

The speech was worthy of Bolivar, worthy of one of the three great men of the world ; of one who was a better man than Buonaparte, and, in my estimation, as great a one as Washington.

In comparing him with the latter, it should never be forgotten, that Washington was at the head of an army of citizen-soldiers ill-disciplined and ill-provided for the field : it may be true ; but, whatever was their discipline, English blood was in their veins, and they were the sons of men who had the energies of people British-born to support them in their struggle. Bolivar was at the head of a very different set of people : he had to deal with men it was difficult to guide, and dangerous

\* I have this account from a personal friend of Bolivar, —Mr. Boyer, a South American merchant.

to restrain—with soldiers without subordination, and patriots without principles, to be depended on by their leaders.

In 1819, when Bolivar was in exile in Jamaica, the same savage spirit which drove him from his country pursued him to this island. His assassination was determined on, but a wrong person was murdered by mistake. Tom Cringle's account of this affair is very different from that which I received from the gentleman with whom Bolivar dined on the day in question. The party had left the dinner-table, and Mr. Maxwell Hyslop was in conversation with Bolivar, when some one entered and said a man had been killed at the house where the General lodged. Bolivar on the spot said to Mr. Hyslop, "Somebody has been mistaken for me." They now proceeded to his house, and it was evident enough that such was the case. In his bed-room there was a man lying dead in the General's hammock; and that unfortunate person was the aid-de-camp of Bolivar, or commissary, who had arrived but that evening unexpectedly at Kingston, and, being fatigued, had lain down in the General's hammock. It fortunately happened for Bolivar that he was later than usual that evening in returning home; so that when the assassin entered the room and found a person in the hammock, he had no doubt of its being Bolivar, and his stiletto was instantly

buried in the bosom of the unfortunate commissary. I am sorry for the African character to have to add, that the murderer was a young negro of about eighteen years of age; but I am still more sorry to have reason to believe that he was employed by a white man, and that white man a Spaniard,—one well to do in the world, and still tolerated in it. The white villain, however, escaped detection, and the execution of the black one was thought sufficient for the ends of justice.

Such was the providential escape of this great man, and such the means that had been frequently had recourse to, to get rid of him, but which God had not permitted to succeed.

There is a Golgotha near Kingston, on the narrow isthmus that terminates in Port-Royal, called the Palisades, where many a brave tar is laid up in ordinary, who triumphed over Frenchmen and Spaniards, and succumbed to the first broadside of yellow fever. There are, moreover, two awkward-looking frames at the extremity of what is called Gallows Point, where many a modern buccaneer,

“Who follow’d o’er the seas his watery journey,  
And merely practised as a sea-attorney,”

has been suspended for little irregularities in his sea-practice. A few years ago there were a number of pirates executed here,—an account of



which is given by Tom Cringle in the very highest *alto-relievo* style of Tom's mode of sticking out his most prominent representations. He describes the chief of the pirates as a young man of noble aspect, beautifully moulded: he "had never seen so fine a face, such perfection of features, and such a clear dark smooth skin; it was a finer face than Lord Byron's. It was the countenance, indeed, of a most beautiful youth, melancholy and evidently anxious for the large pearls that coursed each other down his forehead and cheeks; and the slight quivering of his under-lip, every now and then, evinced the struggle that was going on within." After taking a miniature from his neck, and glaring intensely on it as he pronounced the words, "Adios, Maria! Adios, Maria!" the signal was given. "The lumbering flap of the long drop was heard, and five-and-twenty human beings were wavering in the sea-breeze in the agonies of death; the other eighteen suffered on the same spot the week following; and, for long after, this fearful and bloody example struck terror into the Cuba fishermen."

Now first of all, for the forty-three executed, you must read nineteen. My informant is a gentleman who was the foreman of the jury. There were nine executed on one day, and eleven on another. The name of the youthful captain of the pirates was Gaetano Aragonitza, and the

vessel he commanded was called the Taragazani, afterwards in his Majesty's service under the name of the Renegade, commanded by Lieutenant Fiott.

The young Spaniard, Gaetano, was said to be of a most respectable family, and had come out to Cuba to join a relative in commerce, when, from some disappointments, he placed himself at the head of one of the most desperate gangs of the Cuba pirates.

It appeared on evidence, that he was not excelled by his comrades in his sanguinary cruelty, and that his atrocities even were greater than those of many amongst them. It was admitted by the English officer who had taken him, that he had fought his vessel with desperate gallantry, and, when overcome, had conducted himself in such a manner, that if he had been any other than a pirate, he would have shaken him by the hand. After conviction an offer was made to the jailor of ten thousand dollars, by a stranger supposed to be a Spaniard, to allow him to escape. The same offer, it is said, was first made to bribe the judge; but the practice of South America was not in fashion in Jamaica. When sentence was passed, he thanked the court, the judge, and the jury for their impartiality, and for the advantage of legal defenders. His appearance was highly prepossessing; he was of good

birth and education, and elegant manners: he called himself a Biscayan. It was proved on the trial, that for some very slight offence he had killed the cook in his own vessel, first having fired at him without effect, and then causing him to walk over the plank.

When they were retiring from the court, one of them, named Pierre, cried out for mercy. The young captain turned round, and in a solemn tone said, "Mercy, indeed! There is no mercy for us here—we must look for it above." At the execution, the rope broke with one of them named Hernandez, who was said to be the most ferocious of the gang: he cried aloud several times for mercy, and did not cease imploring it till another rope was procured and the execution was finished. The head of this man is now in my possession: it was given to me by Dr. Chamberlayne. Phrenologically speaking, it is one of the worst heads I ever saw: the organs of destructiveness are extremely large; and all those others which increase at the expense of the intellectual ones are equally developed.

A little above Bull Bay, about seven or eight miles from Kingston, there is a very beautiful waterfall, which in Europe people would go a day's journey to visit; but here an hour's ride is too great an exertion for the finest scenery in the world. There are hundreds of persons in Kingston

who have never seen this beautiful fall ; I have met with some who have never heard of it. The fall is 200 feet. There is a projecting rock about the centre, on which, in the rainy season, when the Mamee river is swelled to a considerable size, the great body of water is broken into a foaming torrent, the spray of which glitters in the sunbeams as it spreads abroad. This little cataract reminded me very much of the waterfall at the Dargle in the neighbourhood of Dublin ; but, of the two, the Dargle excels in the beauty of the surrounding scenery.

Before I conclude, allow me to recall to your recollection the sites and names of those ancient towns and cities of the Spaniards, most of which have now passed away, and "left not a wreck behind," with the exception of a wilderness of bricks in Spanish Town, and some vestiges of ruins in the cane-fields of St. Anne's. The first capital of Jamaica was Sevilla Nueva, 1510-12, founded by Esquevel, on the site of an Indian village occupied by a plantation called Sevilla. Sloane saw the ruins in 1688. The celebrated Peter Martyr was the Abbot : Sloane found a tabular stone over the gate with his name on it ; but he is wrong in supposing that Martyr ever was in Jamaica,—the city was abandoned long before the arrival of the English. The ruins were "black with age," and overgrown with brushwood at the time of

Penn's conquest ; for which changes a longer period than forty or fifty years cannot be assigned, for the city had then been abandoned a great number of years, and could not have subsisted above ninety years. Nothing certain is known of the reasons the Spaniards had for abandoning it.

The following are the names and sites of the Spanish settlements and harbours often mentioned by the Spanish historians :—

Sevilla Nueva,	S.E. of Mammee Bay.
Melilla,	Port Maria.
Oristan,	Bluefield's Bay.
St. Jago de la Vega,	Spanish Town.
Caguaya,	Port Royal.
St. Gloria,	St. Anne's Bay.
Port Esquevel,	Old Harbour.

I fear I have been giving you information of little importance ; but the little that we do know of the early history of this island cannot altogether be devoid of interest.

I am, my dear Madam,

Your very obedient Servant,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXIV.

## A B S E N T E E S.

---

TO W. FORBES STUART, Esq.

Kingston, Aug. 10, 1834.

My dear Sir,

The late change which has taken place in the condition of the negro population of these islands, must necessarily lead to great alterations in the mode of managing plantations. It requires as little knowledge of human nature, as of political economy, to be assured that no man will labour without reward who can avoid it. Hitherto coercion was necessarily employed to obtain labour; but the new law, in making coercion the legal penalty of its infraction, instead of an arbitrary punishment summarily inflicted, has deprived it of the character which chiefly constituted its terrors; for nothing, I apprehend, can be more productive of terror than the power of inflicting punishment in the heat of passion. That stimulus to labour is therefore in the hands of the special justice, not what it was in those of the overseer. In some

cases in four years, in others in six years, it will not exist at all. In the intermediate time conciliation to a great extent must be looked to, to effect what coercion formerly did. Is it to the persons who are only acquainted with the influence of the latter? is it to those whose feelings have been galled by the deprivation of that instrument of authority? is it to those who have not been entrusted with the temporary power of inflicting even the lessened punishment the law allows, and consequently whose objections to the remedial spirit of that law are not likely to be diminished,—that the absent proprietors are to look for the introduction of conciliatory measures in the management of their estates, which will be a substitute for those whose influence is no longer to be exerted on the negro's fears? Previous to the introduction of the new system, I fully expected to see many of the absentees arrive, to enter on the new management of their estates; for previous to August I was fully persuaded, as I now am, that a change of management is absolutely requisite to insure a continuance of labour. There were many arrangements to be entered into by the masters with the negroes on their properties; and the 1st of August was an auspicious time for such accommodation of matters between master and labourer, as might be productive of present satisfaction and future advantage.



But very few proprietors have come out; amongst those, however, who have lately arrived, is the nephew of M. G. Lewis, whose family holds two valuable properties here.

The late well-known M. G. Lewis occasionally sojourned here, but he resided chiefly on his estate, named Cornwall, in Westmoreland, and sometimes at another property, Hordley, in St. Thomas in the East. He visited Jamaica in 1815, and again in 1817. On his first arrival, he found his negroes discontented and almost rebellious, at Cornwall. On his second visit, he found his other negroes at Hordley in a still worse condition.

By his two visits he saved his properties! Both of them are in the hands of his heirs, and not under the superintendence of the Court of Chancery. One of the proprietors, the son of Sir Henry Lushington, is now on the island, following the example of Lewis; seeing with his own eyes how the management of his properties are going on, and feeling the responsibility which rests upon him of ascertaining, by actual observation, and not by communications from his planting attorney, how 580 human beings, that are dependent on *his* humanity for their welfare (and who, not a great many years ago, were dependent on his predecessor's moderation for their limbs and lives) are treated on his properties.

I am well aware I am addressing you on an un-



promising subject, but I am also aware I am addressing myself to one to whom the incidents of a work of fiction are not of more importance than actual occurrences, which are connected with the interests of hundreds of families in England, and with those of 300,000 beings of the human species here.

Lewis is not spoken of with much favour in Jamaica ;—I mean by the whites, for it is not the fashion in the West Indies to take the sentiments of the negroes into any account. But I may just intimate, that whoever is popular with the negroes must, of necessity, be in a degree of disfavour more than unpopular with the white people. Lewis very soon discovered the errors of the old system of management after his arrival. He abolished the barbarous practice of flogging females ;—he abolished the use of the cart-whip *in the field*, and allowed no punishment to be inflicted till twenty-four hours after the commission of the offence ;—he gave every Saturday to the negroes ;—he gave them an additional yearly holiday, which he called the royal holiday. In fact, nearly eighteen years ago, Lewis anticipated the intentions of the framers of the recent measure for the amelioration of the condition of the slave. Honour be to his memory, for the humanity of his conduct ! and well may his heirs be grateful to that memory, as often as they recollect that the preservation of the properties

which they inherit is due to the wisdom of the measures he pursued during both his visits. Lewis was no favourite with the white people; he is spoken of—not as a man who granted unusual indulgences to his negroes, but as an author who wrote a work, the morality of which was of a questionable nature. But the negroes were, fortunately, blissfully ignorant that Massa was a maker of any books, good, bad, or indifferent: they only knew that he was the maker of their happiness on his estate; and most thankful to his memory, I can tell his impugnors, are they to this day, for the advantages they still derive from the benevolent policy he adopted on his properties.

In his last visit, so great was the jealousy occasioned by his reform in the management of his estates, that the Custos of an adjoining parish, in a charge to the grand jury, took occasion to point out the dangers the colony had to apprehend from the new spirit of innovation that had gone abroad. “Many,” said this functionary, “out of this country, and some in it, had thought proper to interfere with our system, and, by their insidious practices and dangerous doctrines, to call the peace of the island into question, and to promote disorder and confusion.”\* This is the common language

\* A person subsequently came over from St. James's, to inform Mr. Lewis that only a part of the observations

of persons who have brought Jamaica to what it is. I would only ask to refute their assertions, by comparing their plantations with those of Lewis at the present time. One of the dangerous doctrines alluded to, was Lewis's opinion that the evidence of negroes ought to be heard against whites, though it might not be incumbent on a jury to believe it.

The alteration in the management at first occasioned some diminution in the produce, which must have been very gratifying to those who were acquainted with his sentiments on the subject of the cart-whip. "If the estate," says Lewis, "must go to rack and ruin without its use, to rack and ruin the estate must go." But the estate has not gone to rack and ruin, though many a one around it has. The necessity for the alteration in the management is described in a few words, which every absentee-proprietor, who has an income to expect from Jamaica, should read with the most profound attention.

At this time, its information is more important than ever; and that proprietor, I tell him, who sits down in the foolish security of other management of his plantation than his own, or at least in perfect confidence in a stranger's interest in its cultivation, and discretion in the adaptation of that

that fell from the Custos was intended to apply to him, the most offensive part being *only* for the Methodists.

management to the altered circumstances of the country, before three years will find that he has rested his security on a weak foundation. I tell that proprietor, that the negroes would love their masters better than their attorneys; and now that extra labour is to be obtained from them by their own consent, if they find their master abandon them to the care of others, they will withhold their labour, and in a few years they will abandon him. I know that you have friends who are deeply interested in this question: so have I connexions, whose interests are not matters of indifference to me. My views may not be theirs: my experience may be contrary to their impressions; and to oppose prevailing prejudices in this colony, has hitherto been to be considered hostile to the interests of the proprietors: it is to me, however, of more importance to state what I believe to be truth that is advantageous to be made known, than to court any favour I might gain, by lulling a mistaken security into repose—by suppressing facts that may be disagreeable to hear, but injurious to all parties to conceal. “I am fully persuaded,” says Lewis, “that instances of tyranny to negroes are now very rare in this island. But I must still acknowledge, from my own sad experience, since my arrival, that, unless a West India proprietor occasionally visit his estates himself, it is utterly im-

possible for him to be certain that his deputed authority is not abused, however good may be his intentions, and however vigilant his anxiety.

“ When the estates became mine, the one upon which I am now residing was managed by an attorney considerably advanced in years, who had been long in our employment, and who bore the highest character for probity and humanity. He was both attorney and overseer; and it was a particular recommendation to me that he lived in my own house, and therefore had my slaves so immediately under his eye, that it was impossible for any subaltern to misuse them without his knowledge. His letters to me expressed the greatest anxiety and attention respecting the welfare and comfort of the slaves.

“ This man died about two years ago.

“ While I fancied my attorney to be resident on Cornwall, he was, in fact, generally attending to a property of his own, or looking after estates of which he had also the management in distant parts of the island. During his absence, an overseer of his own appointing was left in absolute possession of his power, which he abused to such a degree, that every slave of respectability was compelled to become a runaway. The property was nearly ruined, and at length he committed an act of such severity, that the negroes, one and all, fled to Savannah la Mar, and threw themselves



upon the protection of the magistrates, who came over to Cornwall, and investigated the complaint; and *now* at length the attorney, who had known frequent instances of the overseer's tyranny, had frequently rebuked him for them, and had redressed the sufferers, but who still dared to abuse my confidence so grossly as to continue him in this situation, upon this public exposure thought proper to dismiss him. Yet while all this was going on—while my negroes were groaning under the iron rod of this petty tyrant—and while the public magistrature was obliged to interfere to protect them from this cruelty—my attorney had the insolence and falsehood to write me letters, filled with assurances of his perpetual vigilance for their welfare—of their perfect good treatment and satisfaction; nor, if I had not come to Jamaica, in all probability, should I ever have had the most distant idea how abominably the poor creatures had been misused."

And what was the result of Lewis's *interference* in his own affairs, and what the effect of the remedial measures he introduced on his properties? They are best given in the proprietor's own words:—

"I cannot but own myself most richly rewarded for all my pains and expense in coming hither, for every risk of the voyage, and for every possible sacrifice of my pleasures. There is nothing earthly

that is too much to give for the power of producing an effect so beneficial."

In the above account Lewis speaks of his estate in Westmoreland : he now visits his other plantation in St. Thomas in the East, and the following brief extract describes the condition of that property :—

"Report had assured me that Hordley was the best managed estate in the island ; and as far as the soil was concerned, report appeared to have said true : but my trustee had also assured me that my negroes were the most contented and best disposed ; and here there was a lamentable incorrectness in the account. I found them in a perfect uproar ; complaints of all kinds stunned me from all quarters : all the blacks accused all the whites, and all the whites accused all the blacks ; and as far as I could make out, both parties were in the right. There was no attachment to the soil to be found *here*. The negroes declared, one and all, that if I went away and left them to groan under the same system of oppression, without appeal or hope of redress, they would follow my carriage and establish themselves at Cornwall. I had soon discovered that although they had told me plenty of falsehoods, many of their complaints were but too well founded. Trusting to these fallacious reports of the Arcadian state of happiness at Hordley, I



supposed that I should have nothing to do but grant a few indulgences, and establish the regulations already adopted with success on Cornwall. It was, however, considerable relief to me to find, upon examination, that no act of personal ill-treatment was alleged against the trustee himself, who was allowed to be sufficiently humane in his own nature, and was only complained of for allowing the negroes to be maltreated by the book-keepers and other inferior agents with absolute impunity. Being an excellent planter, *he confined his attention entirely to the cultivation of the soil; and when the negroes came to complain of some cruelty committed by the book-keepers or the black governors, he refused to listen to them, and he left their complaints uninquired into, and consequently unredressed. The result was, the negroes were worse off than if he had been a cruel man himself; for his cruelty would have given them only one tyrant, whereas his indolence left them at the mercy of eight.*"

Lewis proceeded to establish tranquillity on his property. He appointed a neighbouring gentleman of a humane disposition to the office of protector of the negroes: one book-keeper was dismissed for oppressive conduct, which was admitted by the trustee and stigmatised in the strongest terms; the other book-keeper ran away the next morning: the black governor was

also got rid of;—and these sources of discontent being removed, additional holidays, allowances, and other indulgences granted, in a few days he left his negroes “with tears running down their cheeks, and all with thanks for the protection he had shown them, and earnest entreaties that he would soon come to visit them again.”

Such were the means Lewis took to *improve* his plantations: he looked beyond the crops of this year or the next, and he accordingly improved the condition of his negroes, well assured that in so doing he was serving his own interests better than by making it his only study to exact the utmost labour, and to obtain present advantages at any sacrifice of future interests. But what is the use of referring to past times? what need to make long quotations from a work so recently published, and so easily to be procured? The utility of the reference consists in the application of the observations I have cited to the present times. The necessity of quoting these accounts is occasioned by the erroneous opinions that prevail with respect to the condition of the properties of absentees, on which every thing is supposed to be going on well so long as the returns are not suddenly diminished: and that necessity more strongly suggested itself to me, because the motives of every person who is unconnected with colonial property, who is opposed to the present system of

management, are suspected of hostility to Jamaica interests. But Lewis, a proprietor of two valuable estates, the owner of nearly 600 negroes, cannot be suspected of being desirous of injuring a country from which he derived, I believe, his only means.

Things have not changed with respect to the management of the absentees' estates, since Lewis was in Jamaica. The Abolition Bill has put an end to field-punishments, but there are innumerable vexations which that measure has left untouched; and I speak advisedly when I assert that my own experience, in parallel instances, bears out the account of Lewis in all particulars. In the parish I am now in, and I believe in all the large towns, there are few agricultural negroes; consequently, there can be no grievances of the nature of those I have alluded to. In what I have stated of the management of the country property, I am influenced by no feelings adverse to the attorneys: I have never been on other than good terms with them, and having the pleasure of being acquainted with a great number of them, I freely admit in private life they generally are as estimable gentlemen, and as honourable men, as any class of persons in any other country. It is the system I object to, and not the agents. The master who has but his own property to attend to, must surely be able to devote more attention to it

than an agent who has the management of twenty. That agent, I contend, no matter how conscientious he may be, can never feel a master's interest in the soil. The negroes cannot regard that agent, however lenient he may be to them, as they would their master. There is a natural dislike to delegated authority. The Irish peasant abhors it in the middle man ; the negro labourer loves it just as little in the attorney.—I fear I have exhausted your patience ; I will tax it no further than to give you the result of Lewis's experiment on the negro character, and on the condition of his estates in the last words of his journal : " What other negroes may be, I will not pretend to guess ; but I am certain there cannot be more tractable or better disposed persons, take them for all in all, than my negroes of Cornwall—(he had elsewhere spoken as favourably of those of Hordley). I only wish that in my future dealings with white persons, whether in Jamaica or out of it, I could but meet with half so much gratitude, affection, and good will."

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

LETTER XXV.

---

TO DR. JAMES JOHNSON.

Kingston, Aug. 20, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Some of the most fertile lands in Jamaica are situated in the mountainous districts. The soils are as various in the high lands as in the plains; —the common mould, *fusca vulgaris*; a dark-coloured loam, *lutea montana*, or yellow earth; a red earth, *subpinguis crocea*, and various marls, of which the white friable sort is the most abundant. Generally speaking, the quantity of really rich and fertile land is not so great as the extent of country would lead us to believe. Limestone is the principal formation of the mountains. In the St. Andrew's Mountains there is a white marble which I believe has never been brought into use. Varieties of spars are found in the Blue Mountains: at Port Royal a species of argillaria, a solid formation of clay and gravel. In most of the high lands, immense masses of transition rock

mixed with coral formations, are to be found. Some of the northern rivers, especially Roaring River, have their beds incrustated with depositions of tophus. Livid sulphureous stone is found in the neighbourhood of the most of the hot wells; but I believe real pumice has never been discovered in Jamaica. Quartz abound in every variety, and the thunderbolt stone, lydium, which the Indians fashioned into those forms for domestic purposes which caused it to be mistaken for an ærolite.

The climate in the high mountains is almost European. At St. Catherine's Peak, the height of 5000 feet above the level of the sea, I have seen the thermometer range from forty-five to sixty-five; while on the Blue Mountain Peak, which is 7700 feet above the sea's level, the thermometer has been known to range from forty-five at sun-rise to fifty-six at noon; while in Kingston, at the same time, the temperature would have been from seventy-five to eighty-five. Frost and snow are unknown in Jamaica; mountains of less elevation in other parts of the world are seldom without snow on their summits. In the course of a year I have but once seen hailstones, and then of a size which I never saw in Europe. It may give you some better idea of the comparative heights of the mountains of Jamaica, and those remarkable for their elevation in other parts of the world, to set down the height of each,—the former from Martin's History of the British Colonies:—



	Feet.		Feet.
Blue Mountain Peak	7,700	White Mountain,	
		Himalayah . . .	26,462
Portland's Gap . . .	5,640	Mont Blanc . . .	15,732
Catharine's Peak . .	4,970	Peak Teneriffe . .	11,022
Clifton House . . .	4,228	Etna . . . . .	10,954
Flamstead . . . . .	3,800	Vesuvius . . . .	3,978
Stoney Hill . . . .	1,360	Ben M'Dhu . . . .	4,300
Hope Tavern . . . .	699	Benlawers, do. . . .	3,930

The difference of the climate of the mountains of Jamaica from that of the plains is so great, that a stranger might almost fancy himself transported into a European country. I was not aware of the full extent of this great difference till I visited St. Catharine's Peak. A ride of four hours took me from Kingston to Flamstead, in the neighbourhood of which my friend Mr. Dunn resided, in as dreary a mountain-district as a hermit or a hater of the world might covet for an abode. The following day I intended to ascend the Peak, but the rain set in before day-break, and it fell in torrents throughout the day. In the intervals between the showers, the sweeping of the thin fleecy mist through the declivities of the mountain to me presented a novel and most extraordinary appearance. I had seen nothing like it except in the parish of Thomas in the Vale, where the fog that falls nightly in this district is drifted by the strong winds along the face of the mountains that surround the beautiful vale of Sixteen Mile Walk,



which is situated southerly at the foot of the main ridge of mountains that intersect the island. The vapours begin to gather at night-fall; they are heaviest immediately before sun-rise, and are then dissipated in two streams, one following the course of the mountains, the other of the river. Washington Irving should visit Jamaica to outdo the dreariness of his picture of the wet Sunday at the country-inn in England. A wet Sunday in a desolate mountain-residence in a dreary mountain-district in Jamaica, is to a gentleman who has come a pleasuring from the lowlands, one of the miseries in human life in solitary places, and under the depressing control of the "skiey influences," which is most intolerably wearisome.

The following day I was fortunate enough to be introduced to a medical gentleman, who resides in the Port Royal mountains, who offered to accompany me to St. Catharine's Peak. This gentleman, who lives in the seclusion of a mountain-residence, is a person whose scientific attainments, and especially his botanical knowledge, are better known in some parts of Great Britain, through his valuable contributions, than they are in Jamaica, or are indeed likely to be estimated there. I have pretty generally observed, that genuine merit and undoubted talent, especially that which is applied to scientific pursuits, are usually combined with qualities which attach us to the private characters

of those who follow them. And perhaps there are no qualities which entitle the scientific man to public estimation more than modesty—the graceful veil which covers merit, but does not conceal it, and the unassuming manners of the man of genius, which present him to our eyes in his own plain and unsophisticated character—“in wit a man, simplicity a child”—and in that character I had the pleasure of seeing Dr. M’Fadgyen, the gentleman I have just spoken of. If the poor pedant, who struts and frets his hour on the stage of literature or science,—or the self-sufficient savant, who plays the man of learning in society, and labours before the world to astonish the illiterate, were only to see the contrast between bloated pretension and unpresuming merit, he would probably find the comparison so unfavourable to himself, that if his arrogance was not insuperable, he would lower the tone of his dogmatic sagacity, and enlarge, in his own apprehension, the boundaries of human knowledge, by ceasing to believe that any information which he had not was not worth having. He might still continue the Sir Oracle of his own coterie; and when he oped his mouth, his solemn look, at least, might say, “Let no dog bark;” but when he left the society of his own submissive circle, he might learn to accustom his tympanum to the sounds that are most unmusical to the ears of a solemn blockhead or a supercilious sage—the

sounds of another's voice, or the sentiments of those who are not his sycophants.

Dr. M'Fadgyen accompanied me to the plantation at the foot of St. Catharine's Peak, one of the highest settlements in the island of Jamaica, and is probably 4500 feet above the sea. On our route from the Doctor's, a distance of six or seven miles, over the mountains of Port Royal, every step almost furnished a subject for botanical observation ; and no observation of my companion was devoid of interest.

In the mountain-districts many European plants and vegetables are to be found which are not in the lowlands. I have seen the wild strawberry on the summit of St. Catharine's Peak ; and, about three hundred feet below the summit, the apple and the peach ; and, amongst trees which are not to be found except in the high lands, the English oak. On the other hand, many of the tropical fruits which flourish in the plains, are not to be found at this elevation. The large majority of the fruit-trees of Jamaica are exotics ; a great many are from the Isle de France, brought here in a vessel captured by Rodney ; many more from the South Sea Islands, especially Otaheite, for which Jamaica is indebted to Captain Bligh. I have seen the vine in these mountains producing grapes of an excellent flavour and tolerable size. It is not cultivated for wine ; but why it

should not be cultivated for that purpose, and successfully, there can be no good reason assigned. Brown says, "The grapes do not ripen regularly; and I believe the assertion is generally true, but I have nowhere seen grapes ripened more regularly; than the Muscadines and natives do in this island." Why not try the experiment of making wine of the latter? On the summit of St. Catherine's Peak Mr. Chisholm, who had the kindness to accompany us, pointed out a plant, without which, he informed me, the fugitive negroes could not abide in the woods: it is a parasitical plant—a species of wild pine, which grows on the large trees; I believe its botanical name is *Tillandsia*: in the hollow at the base of the leaves there is a natural reservoir of water; each plant may contain about half a tumbler full of water.

There is another singular plant called the water-withe, or Jamaica grape-vine. The stem is full of a tasteless water: three or four feet of the plant will yield a pint of water. Brown says, "The small black grapes it produces would make a good wine if properly managed."

There is a climbing plant very common in the woods—a species of *rhamnus*, which has got the name of chewstick, from the use to which it is converted by the Creoles and coloured people. The taste is an agreeable bitter. It is one of the ingredients in the composition of the negro spruce-

beer—a very refreshing and wholesome beverage. The chewstick is not unknown to ladies of fashion in England, both in the shape of a tooth-brush and a powder for the teeth. When chewed, it raises a good deal of foam with the saliva, which gives the negroes, who are eternally chewing this stick, a very disagreeable, almost a rabid appearance.

One of the most singular plants in the island is the *jalapa mirabilis*, or four o'clock flower, which keeps its petals closed during the hottest hours of the day, and only opens them in the cool part of the afternoon.

Roucou, or arnotto-tree, is found here abundantly; the seeds are covered with a waxy substance, which are similar to that of the *ceroxylon Andicola*, though not in sufficient abundance to convert to the use which in South America is made of the latter. The people of the Quindiu Andes, we are told by Humboldt, fabricate tapers with the thick layers of wax that cover the trunk of this palm.

A variety of indigenous plants have been of late recommended for cultivation, in lieu of those expensive cultures which it is apprehended the new measure will impede or diminish. Of these there are three which deserve the serious attention of the planters; namely, the caoutchouc plant, the *coulteria tinctoria*, and the pita. The withe,



which yields the Indian rubber, in Jamaica abounds in the woodlands. In South America there are two trees which produce the Indian rubber of commerce—the *hevea caoutchouc* and the *jatrophia elastica*. The merit of bringing this plant lately into notice belongs to a Mr. M'Geachy; but it appears to have been made known to Lord Belmore, who carried to England various preparations of it. The mode of collecting it is by cutting through the withe, and allowing the milky juice to exude, and then coagulating it with alum; in this state it is fit to cast into moulds of any shade. "A good withe may produce at one flowing from one half to a whole pint. I should think," says Mr. M'Geachy, "the length of a foot of the withe would produce enough of the milk, if properly extracted, to make a cubic inch of good Indian rubber. I tried it on cloth, which I rendered perfectly waterproof, simply by immersion in the liquid, and exposure to the sun." In America the consumption of Indian rubber is immense, and every day the application of its use is extending. A patent has been lately taken out for its employment for the inside sheathing of vessels. The *coulteria tinctoria* has been lately described by Dr. M'Fadgyen in the *Jamaica Physical Journal*, a very excellent medical periodical, edited by Dr. Paul.

The following is the substance of that description :—

“This plant is a native of Peru. It was introduced about two years ago into this country. Some plants of it were tried in the garden at Hope estate, Liguanea, where they have thriven, and produce frequent crops of pods in the course of the year. It grows so freely, indeed, as to have become a weed.

“It thrives in the most parched and arid of our plains. It may therefore be cultivated in the extensive savannahs in the neighbourhood of Kingston, which at present produce little else than firewood. It soon comes into bearing ;—a plantation of it would last for a period of twenty or thirty years.

“The pods of this plant contain tannin, and gallic acid in a greater proportion than exists in any other vegetable production. Hence they may, in the first place, be used as a substitute for oak-bark in the process of tanning. According to the report of an intelligent tanner, at Sandwich, communicated to Dr. Hamilton at Plymouth, ‘they are four times stronger than oak-bark. The process is also much quicker, a piece of leather being tanned with them in a fortnight.’

“These pods may, in the second place, be employed in dyeing and ink-making, as a substitute for Aleppo galls. It can be easily proved, by very simple experiments, that the gallic acid is more abundant in the pods of this plant than in the best



Aleppo galls. If, therefore, it can be brought to market at a cheaper rate, it has, in every respect, the advantage. We are to bear in mind it grows in land unfit for any other cultivation; no works, no instruments, and no expensive process, is required to prepare the article for market: the only labour required, after the plantation has been established, is that of collecting the crop. We may set down the price in London at £23. 6s. 8d. per ton, while the usual London market-price of Aleppo galls is £50 sterling.

“Let us suppose an acre to contain 3556 of these shrubs, and that each shrub yields five pounds of pods; the total produce would be about seven tons, which would give to the grower £89. 4s. 1d. for a single acre,—a return which, if we take every thing into consideration, far exceeds what either sugar or coffee ever gave in the best of times.

“I flatter myself that I have not exaggerated the value of this plant. We are approaching a period when the usual articles of cultivation must of necessity be in a great measure given up.”

The following is an abridged account of the pita plant, communicated by Dr. Bancroft to the Jamaica Agricultural Society.

Another plant which Dr. Hamilton strongly recommends for cultivation in this island is the pita, the fibres of which, prepared by maceration, are very extensively used in South America, for

cordage of various descriptions, particularly in shipping. This plant is the *Bromelia pita*, and belongs to the same genus with the pine-apple and the common penguin. The same low, dry, and poor soils, that suit the penguin, would be equally favourable for the growth of the pita. Dr. Hamilton states, that the fibre of the pita has been found to possess many advantages, over not only hemp, but every other fibrous substance employed in the manufacture of canvass or cordage. He has had specimens of this fibre from Carthagena, which measured ten feet in length, or between three and four times the ordinary length of the best hemp. As to its lightness, he has been able to ascertain the difference of weights of equal bulks of pita and of hemp to be one-sixth in favour of the former: hence, taking the weight of the standing and the running rigging of a man-of-war made of hemp, at twelve tons, a reduction of two tons in the top weight would be effected by the substitution of the pita. Dr. Hamilton mentions that experiments have been carefully made by Captain M'Adam, of the Royal Marines, on the respective properties of this fibre and of that of hemp; from which he is enabled to state that, while a hempen cord of fifty fathoms, exposed to wet, contracted above twenty-one feet, a similar cord from pita, under the same circumstances, contracted only between fifteen

and sixteen feet. It appears that the average importation of hemp and flax during the last five years was about 28,677 tons, the whole of which might be more advantageously supplied by pita cultivated in our own colonies.

It appears, besides, that from three to four acres of land are required to produce a ton of flax, but that five acres of the best land in Russia will only produce a ton of hemp. Now, by substituting pita for the quantity of hemp and of flax annually imported from Russia, which is estimated as amounting together to 25,000 tons, we should not only diminish the pecuniary balance of trade against us, but we should bring near 74,000 acres of the present wastes of our colonies in the West Indies under a lucrative culture.

There are three plants which were formerly largely and beneficially cultivated in this island, and the cultivation of which, as staple commodities, may now be considered as wholly abandoned,—that of indigo, cotton, and cocoa. In 1774, the export of Indigo from Jamaica was 141,400 lbs: at the present time not a pound of this valuable commodity is exported from the colony. In 1670, it is stated by Blome, there were sixty cocoa-walks in the island; now, I believe, there is not one which deserves the name of a cocoa-plantation. In 1768, there were 492,600 lbs of cotton exported from this island;



Mr. Martin estimates the quantity now raised at 50,000 lbs. What is the cause of this extraordinary abandonment of culture so suitable to the soil, and so profitable to cultivators in other countries? Is it excessive taxation, or the exhaustion of the soil, or the embarrassments of the planters? These are questions of great importance to the colonists; and unwilling to trust to the published accounts of the occasion of the decline in the cultivation of these three descriptions of produce, I put the following questions to Mr. Welwood Hyslop, a Member of the House of Assembly, whose intelligence I have the highest respect for:—

What has occasioned the abandonment of the culture of indigo, cotton, and cocoa?

Can their culture be again revived?

And, if so, can they be substituted in lieu of the cultivation of sugar with advantage to the proprietor?

To these replies I received the following answer—

“The decrease in the cultivation of indigo, cotton, and cocoa, is owing to various causes—chiefly to excessive taxation, partly to the exhaustion of the soil of the old estates. Indigo was once exclusively cultivated, but, owing to raising the duties about three-quarters of a century ago, it ceased to be a staple, and now is not

cultivated at all. The remains of the ruined indigo-works are still visible in Vere and Liguanea. The government, to meet the expenses of the war, were driven to oppressive taxation on colonial produce. But the levying of excessive imposts on a young product proved that two and two do not always make four in political arithmetic. The culture ceased altogether. Cotton and indigo may be produced on cane land generally, but not profitably. Sugar is the great staple of the island, and nothing on the plains can be grown to such advantage:—coffee and cocoa are best calculated for the mountains. Mr. Pitt carried his taxing views to an enormous pitch."

Further inquiries confirmed the opinion of Mr. Hyslop, that excessive taxation had greatly diminished the cultivation of indigo, but also proved to me that it was not the cause which occasioned it to be abandoned. It was abandoned because it was found a more precarious culture than it had formerly been, or that the climate had become more unfavourable than heretofore for its production. At all events, it was not given up till every planter engaged in its cultivation was ruined by the repeated failure of the crops.

After the repeal of the tax which had proved so injurious to this product, many attempts were

made to re-establish its cultivation, but "a manufacture," says Edwards, "once destroyed, scarce ever takes root again in the same country." He says the indigo-planters, who tried to re-establish it—"were men of knowledge, foresight, and property: that they failed is certain, but of the causes of their failure I confess I can give no satisfactory account. I was told that disappointment trod close at their heels at every step: at one time the fermentation was too long continued; at another the liquor was drawn off too soon; now the pulp was not duly granulated, and now it was worked too much." Nevertheless the works are not expensive; much manual labour is not required, and the process of manufacture is very quick. *But it is a process which requires extreme attention and nicety on the part of the planter or the person who represents the proprietor.*

Humboldt says the indigo of commerce is produced from four species of plants—the indigofera tinctoria, the anil, the argentea, and the disperma. Only one of these was known in Jamaica till the second attempt at cultivation had been made, and had not succeeded. It is very doubtful whether that one plant was the most eligible for cultivation in Jamaica, or whether it was the bastard, or the guatemala indigo, which so much resemble each other as hardly to be distinguished.



Whatever the plant was, its cultivation everywhere proved unsuccessful. Heavy rains, especially after sultry weather, invariably proved injurious to the plants; and wherever the rain lodged for any length of time, the decay was general. The Guatemala and Frank species were at length tried—the seasons proved unpropitious, and both utterly failed. This delicate plant requires the most careful cultivation, the manufacture the greatest nicety; the young plant will not bear excessive heat: in America the slightest frost destroys it; in any stage long-continued heavy rains are injurious to it. Nevertheless, if the cultivation was duly attended to, if competent persons were to be found to undertake the management, who had been previously sent to Guatemala and the Caraccas to learn the nature of the plants and of the process of manufacturing the material, I have no doubt that in the very hilly districts, not in the high mountains, this most valuable culture might be successfully established. Of the value of it some notice may be formed from Humboldt's account of the produce of the Caraccas alone, amounting to six millions of francs, the quantity only that was grown in four or five square leagues; while in Venezuela it exceeded £250,000. One thing, however, is to be borne in mind—that this plant exhausts the soil more than any other, and consequently re-

quires to be planted in fresh ground every two or three years.

The cotton of Jamaica was always considered in the British market inferior in quality to that of any other of the West India Islands; it fetched a lower price, by twenty-five or thirty per cent, than the cotton produced in other islands. This arose from careless cultivation, and inattention in cleaning it. Edwards says, that "such was the obstinacy of habit, that few of the British cotton-planters would give themselves the trouble to select a better sort, or seem, indeed, to wish for it." It is not to be wondered at that cotton should have ceased to have been exported from Jamaica, but to me it is a matter of the greatest wonder that the re-establishment of its cultivation, under more favourable circumstances, should not be attempted at a time like the present, when the opinion generally prevails that the cultivation of sugar must be greatly diminished. From what I have observed of the production of cotton in Egypt during a three years' residence in that country, I am inclined to believe that no other growth could be tried in Jamaica with so much advantage as that of cotton. The soil and climate of Jamaica are much more favourable for it than any part of the United States; and once it is successfully introduced in any country, the rapidity with which its production is increased is almost

incredible. The production of cotton was only introduced into Egypt a few years ago: the first year of its cultivation, only sixty bags were produced; the second year, 50,000; the third year, 120,000; and, in 1824, 140,000. In the United States, the exportation of cotton in eighteen years, namely, from 1797 to 1815, rose from 1,200,000 pounds to 83,000,000. In 1829 the whole consumption of England annually was estimated at 600,000 bags, and that of France at 200,000. The expense of establishing a small cotton-plantation of fifty acres, twenty-five of which are to be planted, Edwards estimates would not exceed £1000 sterling, including purchase of land, of twelve negroes, their maintenance, and the average return one hundred weight of cotton to each acre.

Humboldt relates a very interesting instance of the enlightened views of a South American proprietor, in the management of his plantation. It is a mode of cultivating large estates in lots apportioned to native settlers, by converting enfranchised slaves into small farmers—a practice which, sooner or later, must be adopted in the West Indies, and the sooner the better for all parties. “Count Tovar, on departing for Europe, had parcelled out and let a part of the lands of Cura. Four years afterwards, at his return to America, he found on this spot, finely cultivated in cotton, a little hamlet of thirty or forty houses, which is called Punta

Zamuro, and which we afterwards visited with him. The inhabitants of this hamlet are almost all mulattoes, Samboes, or free blacks. This example of letting out land has been, happily, followed by several other great proprietors. The rent is ten piastres for a vanega of ground, and is paid in money or in cotton.

"I love," continues this accomplished traveller, "to dwell on these details of colonial industry, because they prove to the inhabitants of Europe what, to the enlightened inhabitants of the colonies, has long ceased to be doubtful—that the continent of South America can produce sugar and indigo by free hands, and that the unhappy slaves are capable of becoming peasants, farmers, and landholders."

This is the opinion of the ablest, most accurate, and most dispassionate writer who has given his extensive observations to the world in recent times. My own experience in this colony is entirely in unison with it. The cultivation of the soil can be carried on with free labour; nay, more, the cultivation is likely to be largely augmented by free labour. The negroes will work for wages, but they will not work without wages; they think they have done so too long.

I cannot understand—it is utterly beyond my comprehension to conceive, what good is expected to arise from the fierce spirit of animosity that is



displayed here against the negro character;—a spirit which animates the press, which pervades all colonial politics, and actuates the conduct of those who will have it that the black man is not influenced by the feelings, interests, or affections that sway the white man—that he is insensible to kindness, and therefore is not to be excited to industry, except by terror—that he is incapable of understanding that which is to his own advantage, and therefore will feed on mangoes, and sleep under the wild fig-tree—renounce all the good things of negro life, the shads and herrings, and the relishing pickle that gave a flavour to all his messes—abjure the pepper-pot for mawkish vegetables, and wander in woods rather than work for wages—that his wife and children are so little dear to him, that he will not labour to give them food—that his little ones may say to him, “Father, we are hungry,” and he will not give them to eat—that his wife may stretch forth her hands to him for food and raiment, and he will tell her, “The earth hath roots,” and the beasts of the forests feel not the want of clothing: but the sense of the reply of that miserable woman would be, if the madness of her indignation allowed her utterance, “We cannot live on grass, on berries, water, as beasts, and birds, and fishes.”

I would tell these revilers of the negro, that the scorned race, on whose character they void their

rheum, degraded as it has been by slavery, is not yet so abject, so sick of the civilised world, "that it will love nought but even the mere necessities upon it." The negro likes his comforts fully as much as the white man; the negro woman loves her luxuries quite as much as the buckra lady. Human nature is pretty much the same in all countries; and, as far as my experience goes, in the various parts of the globe, complexion has as little to do with its yearnings, its failings, or its finest traits, as clime or creed.

The refutation of the general opinion, that the negro will not work without the cartwhip, has led me from my subject.

The third cultivation—that of cocoa, or cacao, (from which chocolate is derived, and which latter term will hardly be recognised in the Mexican name *tlalcacahuatl*, its Tolteck origin,) which was at one period the chief article of export of this island, has ceased to be cultivated by the planters; not that the soil proved unfavourable for it, or the culture expensive, or the growth precarious, but that the duty levied on it amounted to a prohibition—*four hundred and eighty per cent. on its marketable value*, says Edwards,—the excise on cocoa in cakes having been raised £12 12s. per cent. exclusive of 11s. 11½d. exacted at the Custom House! In 1831, we are informed by Mr. Martin, Trinidad and Grenada cocoa averaged in



bond in the London market from 24s. to 65s. per cent., while the tax was 56s.; and no less than 230 per cent. on those cocoas which were consumed by the poor. Here is an article nutritious and agreeable, infinitely preferable either to tea or coffee for the poor—which grows in our own colonies, is easily cultivated, and is a cheap commodity; and the withering finger of taxation is laid upon it, it sinks under the pressure, and in a little time it dies. An effort has been recently made to revive it: the duty has been reduced that ought to have been abolished, and the consumption has greatly increased. In 1831, in round numbers, the importation of cocoa in Great Britain was three million and a half of pounds weight; the quantity of that from the colonies about one half the whole amount.

Mr. Pitt seems to have laboured under the impression of Girolamo Belzoni, that chocolate was a beverage "*puitosto da porci, che da uomine*," for he took effectual means that the drink that is fitter for pigs than men should be kept out of the reach of his poor countrymen. Lord Castlereagh must have considered father Acosta was in the right of regarding cocoa as "a Mexican superstition (*una supersticion*), which a British people could not be made to pay too dear for.

The cocoa is much subject to injury from insects, but it may be considered a hardy plant

in comparison with indigo. One labourer is sufficient for a thousand trees. Humboldt, from 1812 to 1814, estimates the sugar produce of Cuba at 200,000 casks, value eight millions of piastres, and the number of slaves employed in field-cultivation alone 143,000; while the Carfaccas produce cocoa to the value of five millions of piastres, and have only 60,000 slaves, both in the towns and in the fields.

I had intended to have given you some account of the medical plants of this island, especially of those whose medical properties are known to the negroes; but I find it would be impossible to enumerate them even in any reasonable limits. I am, however, so thoroughly persuaded that a variety of very valuable plants are known to the negroes, whose medical uses we are unacquainted with, that I think any person who would undertake an account of the popular medicine of the negroes, would bring to light much information serviceable to medical science.

In many parts of the mountain-roads of Port Royal, the hedges abound with roses. The lemon-grass is also found in abundance, and many other fragrant plants, which literally perfume the air, as one passes along the narrow mountain-paths.

Most of the vegetables used in Europe are raised in the mountains, and to these are added the native ones, which are hardly inferior to the

former, such as callalu, ochro, chuchu, and that most excellent substitute for potatoes—the Indian and white yam. The bread-fruit was brought to Jamaica by Captain Bligh, from Otaheite; the shaddock, from the East Indies; the lime-orange, pomegranate, and melon, from Spain; the cinnamon and mango, from L'Isle de Bourbon; the logwood-tree, from the Spanish Main. The cedar abounds near St. Catherine's Peak, but it is not the same species as that of Lebanon. The cedar of Syria is much larger than any I have seen in Jamaica. The cabbage-tree was introduced into the island by Admiral Knowles—the acca-tree from Africa, the bichy-tree from the coast of Guinea. It is impossible to form any idea of the size and beauty of the foliage of the trees of this island from any description of them. The ceiba, or wild cotton-tree, is the monarch of the forest of Jamaica. Some from root to branches present the appearance of one straight stupendous shaft, of seventy or eighty feet. One of these immense trees, on the Spanish Town road, extends its huge branches completely over one of the broadest roads in the islands.

The mountain-cabbage, one of the most beautiful of the palms, varies in height from 100 to 130 feet. Edwards *is inclined* to believe he saw one 150 feet; and Brown mentions that Mr. Ray

speaks of one that grew to the height of 270 feet, *or thereabouts*. Mr. Hughes, in his Barbadoes History, says the highest palmeto royal, or mountain-cabbage, he saw, was 134 feet. In height and elegance of form there is no tree like it. The trunks of the mahogany and cedar rise to eighty or ninety feet. But for picturesque beauty, the clumps of the bamboo, which line some of the mountain-roads, especially one in the vicinity of the Ramble, the property of Mr. Cockburn, exceed, in the depth of shade and gracefulness of umbrage, all other descriptions of natural arbours. The pimento-tree literally renders the atmosphere redolent of fragrance, which is more than I can say of many of these trees in such favour with our poets. The pimento, moreover, furnishes a poetical image to the observer who looks for minor shrubs about it;—the pimento “suffers no rival plant to flourish within its shade.” The cocoa-tree is, perhaps, the most generally useful to man of all others. It affords him a palatable fruit, a refreshing beverage, a wholesome vegetable, materials for constructing, fibres for cordage, foliage for thatching houses, a spirituous liquor, and a limpid oil.

The cocoa-tree begins to bear fruit, in a rich soil, at four years; in poor, arid land, not before ten years. The tree lives from eighty to one hundred years, and bears till about thirty-five. On an

average, a tree produces annually from eighty to one hundred nuts, which are capable of yielding about twenty pounds of oil. There is a fruit-tree very common in Jamaica, the papaw, the fruit of which is much esteemed by the negroes : the milky juice which exudes from it is thought to possess the property of rendering the toughest meat tender, by applying it over the surface. There is a papaw in the garden of Madame Sanette, from an incision in which, I think, a tea-spoonful of the milky juice would flow in ten minutes. Humboldt says, "in comparing the milky juices of the papaw, the cow-tree, and the hevea (from which the Indian rubber is procured) there appears to be a striking analogy between the juices which abound in caseous matter, and those in which caoutchouc prevails. (Elsewhere, he states that the ultimate principle of cheese is caoutchouc : no wonder that cheese should be indigestible, if we cannot eat Stilton without swallowing Indian rubber.) All the white and newly prepared caoutchouc, as well as the impermeable cloaks manufactured in South America, by placing a layer of milk of hevea between two pieces of cloth, exhale an animal and nauseating odour, which seems to indicate that the caoutchouc, in coagulating, carries with it the caseum, which is, perhaps, only an altered albumen." What a valuable introduction into Jamaica would be that of the *palo de vaca* ! The milk of the

cow-tree is an exception to that of most other plants, which is generally acrid and poisonous ; but this, so far from being bitter or acrimonious, is of an agreeable flavour ; and those who make use of it are said to grow sensibly fatter during the season the tree yields most milk.

The mountains of Jamaica are decked to their highest summits with the brightest verdure. It is not only the giants of the forest that are to be found there : the graceful rivals of the inmates of our conservatories are to be seen in all the native bloom of the wild beauty that delights in liberty : the citron and the orange, the star-apple, and the tamarind, flourish in the lower mountain range ; and wherever the huts of the negroes are congregated in the valleys, or spread over the face of a sloping hill, the patches of ground here and there laid out in gardens, are sure to present the same broad foliage of plantains and bananas, the same bright verdure of waving Guinea-grass and stately corn.

Will the day ever come, when the natural advantages of this noble island will be estimated by their general developement, and not surmised from the limited success of a partial cultivation ? Will the day ever come when these advantages shall obtain the entire attention that is now taken up with futile animosity—when party politics shall be abandoned for patriotic views, and Jamaica shall



become, what Nature intended her to be—a peaceful country, on the face of whose fertility it will be evident to the world, “the labourer is worthy of his hire?”

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXVI.

## P O I S O N S.

---

TO DR. WEBSTER.

Kingston, August 30, 1834.

My dear Sir,

If South America abounds in venomous reptiles, the West Indies have no dearth of poisonous plants; and in former times it is very certain their nature was better known to the negroes, than even their names now are to the white inhabitants. I have inquired a good deal respecting poisons of the negro doctors, and found it difficult enough to overcome their disinclination to enter on this subject. But if their accounts are to be trusted, there are vegetable poisons known to exist here hardly less powerful than any known to us in Europe. Prussic acid, the poison that acts on life with the greatest energy and expedition,—a single drop of which introduced into the circulation of an animal, killing it, says Magendie,

*"comme s'il eut été frappé d'un boulet ou de la foudre,"*—is hardly less powerful than woorara, an Indian plant used by the natives of Guyana for poisoning their arrows: applied to a wound, it produces immediate death, but taken internally, is less speedy in its operation. There are various others known to the natives of these islands, as well as of South America, capable of producing immediate death. The action of most of these is on the nervous system. The most powerful poisons appear to act directly on it. The juice of the upas-tree, used by the Indians for poisoning their arrows, when applied to a wound, kills in five minutes; yet when three times the quantity of the poison is applied to a portion of the sciatic nerve, laid bare for the purpose, it produces no effect. The most direct poison to the nervous system acts quickest when introduced into the circulation by an external wound; and many of the very poisons which destroy the nervous energy most suddenly when applied to a particular nerve, produce no bad effects. To one who looks on the nerves as the circulating medium of a volatile elastic fluid, such as the nervous energy is described by Mead, it will be difficult to understand the possibility of the most powerful poisons being applied to nerves without any ill effects. But may we not look upon the nervous system as the apparatus for the transmission and direction of

the vital energy, or aura, which is the principle of life,—the sanguineous system as the source of its elimination,—and when a virulent poison has been introduced into it, understand why its influence is generally exerted on the nervous system long before it is exerted on the heart? Celsus says that venomous bites kill by extinguishing the vital heat. It is not by coagulating the blood, or, indeed, by any specific action on the blood that is cognisable to us, that many of the most powerful poisons produce death. The woorara produces its effects on the brain, and not the heart; the upas, it is supposed by Orfila, on the spinal column. The ticunas, a very active poison of the Indians, made from the juices of various withes or lianes, evaporated to a thick consistence when introduced into the jugular vein of a dog, kills on the spot, and, unlike the venom of the viper, does not coagulate the blood.

The curare, we are told by Humboldt, is prepared from a withe called vejucó de mavacure, with which the Indians poison their arrows; it kills the largest animals very speedily, and acts on the circulation. It is certain that the flesh of the animals killed by this very active poison is nowise impaired by it. Humboldt remarks, "it seems all the poisons come from the withes."

Raynal makes a similar observation. The creeping plants (he says) called lianes, of which there are vast numbers in all tropical woodlands,

furnished the poison which was in universal request on the continent. The immediate death that arises from this poison, he thinks, so far from coagulating the blood, when mixed with that fluid recently drawn and warm, prevents coagulation, and even, for some time, putrefaction. There is one species of poison arising from decomposition of animal matter, the intensity of whose virus in tropical climates is very little known. Some experiments have been made in Europe, mentioned by Orfila, of putrescent blood having been applied to an abraded surface; one producing death in twenty-six hours; another in eighteen; and of bile in a state of decomposition, being applied to a wound, and death occurring in twenty hours; which event, he says, does not depend on local irritation, or even of its action on the circulating system.

In hot climates, the concentrated poison of putrescent animal matter, I suspect, produces death much more speedily than Orfila states here; and its effects seem to be similar to those of asphyxia, such as came under the care of Dupuytren in three instances, arising from only inhaling the vapour of decomposed animal matter, or sulphureted hydrogen gas.

I stated, in my Eastern Travels, I had been informed by an Arab barber who practised physic, that one of the most deadly poisons was prepared



from the mucous membrane of the intestines, taken from the putrid body; and had also been told by Lady Hester Stanhope, that the Arabs made use of several poisons unknown in Europe, the deadliest of which was that extracted from the intestines of a *murdered* man. I was not a little surprised, very lately, to find that the knowledge of this active poison from the dead human body, known to the Arabs, and whose existence I have heard denied in Europe, was known to the native Indians of the West India Islands, and is described by Garcilasco De la Vega, in his History of the Civil Wars of the Spaniards, in the Indies, vol. 1. chapter 42: he observes, that all the Indians in the Windward Islands poison their arrows by dipping their points into dead bodies. "I shall relate," he continues, "what I have seen happen from one of the quarters of Carjaval, which had been placed on the road of Collasuyn, which is to the south of Cusco. A party of us went one Sunday to take a walk: we were ten or twelve scholars, all *mestifs*—that is, the sons of Spaniards and Indians, the eldest of which was not twelve years old. Having perceived in the fields one of the quarters of the body of Carjaval, we took it into our heads to go and take a look at it; and having approached it, we found that it was one of his thighs, the fat of which had run on the ground; the flesh was of a greenish colour, and quite



corrupted. As we were looking at this horrible object, one of the most hardy of us said, 'I'll wager that there is no one here dare touch it!' Another said, 'There is!' At last one of the most daring of all, named Bartheline Monedero, thinking to perform an act of great courage, thrust the thumb of his right hand into the corrupted thigh. This action astonished us all so much, that we left him, fearing to be infected, crying out, 'Oh, the filthy fellow! Carjaval will make thee suffer for this insolence!' However, he went straight to a rivulet, which was quite near, where he washed his hand several times, and rubbed it with mud, and went home. The next day he came to school, where he showed his thumb, which was extremely swelled; but in the evening all his hand, up to the wrist, was swollen; and the day after, which was Tuesday, the swelling had reached up to the elbow, in such a manner, that necessity compelled him to acquaint his father with the cause of it. Medical assistance was called in; the arm was tightly bandaged, and every kind of remedy was made use of, which was considered would act as a counter-poison. After all this, the patient was very near losing his life; and it was with great difficulty that he escaped, after being four entire months without being able to use his pen, so weak the arm was."

When I was living in Liguanea, where the diffi-

culty of getting fresh provisions was very great, some meat was one day set before us at dinner which was tainted, or, what would be called in England, rather high. About ten o'clock at night, myself, a lady, and Captain Mason, who was then residing with me, were attacked with symptoms of cholera; Captain Mason slightly, but the lady and myself with great depression, cold extremities, and palpitations of the heart. Hot brandy-and-water relieved these symptoms; but it was several days before two of the party perfectly recovered. I knew of an instance in the neighbourhood of Kingston, where a whole family suffered most severely from the poisonous effects of tainted meat, two of the persons having very nearly died. If climate is capable of giving the character of a poison to the putrefaction of animal matter, one can understand the virulence that diseases acquire in hot climates, which are comparatively mild in cold ones.

The action of those powerful poisons, whether vegetable or animal, which suddenly destroy life, are very similar, in their effects, to the influence of those malign diseases, such as plague, cholera, and yellow fever, which at the first seizure prostrate the nervous energy, and produce the same sudden depression of the vital powers.

The venom of poisonous reptiles seems to be wholly similar to that of plants. Fontana, who

made upwards of 6000 experiments on venomous reptiles, states the venom of the viper applied to a nerve is harmless as water ; from which he concludes its action is on the blood, which it coagulates, and gives a tendency to putrescence. He found the venom of the viper not fatal to its own tribe, or to eels or lizards. By the experiments he made on animals, he estimates the quantity sufficient to kill a man at three grains, and twelve to kill a bullock. In the experiments he made, death ensued at seventeen hours, at eighteen, and at the expiration of three days. Dr. Mosely thinks " the same effects are produced by all the tribe of deadly venomous serpents ; and that there is no specific difference between them, except in the violence and rapidity by which the poison is diffused through the body, the rest depending on the state of the weather and habit of body of the subject at that particular time."

By Mangili's experiments it has been ascertained that the venom of serpents, taken internally, produced no bad effects : his assistant swallowed the venom of four vipers without any inconvenience : a crow was given, mixed with some food, the venom extracted from sixteen vipers, without any effect ; yet the dried venom that he had kept for twenty-six months, when put on the inside of the claws of pigeons, produced death, in all, from half an hour to an hour.



The opinion of Celsus that "venomous bites kill by extinguishing vital heat," or, as more recent authors might express it, (though perhaps not more intelligibly,) by depressing the nervous energy, appears to be borne out by the treatment that has been successfully adopted in various parts of the world.

Russell relates that an Indian was bitten by a cobra di capello in the foot: in fifteen minutes his jaws were rigid; he was apparently dead. On *eau de luce* being applied to the wounds, he rallied a little; and he was made to swallow two bottles of wine of Madeira made hot, by means of a funnel introduced into his mouth. The man recovered. Orfila calls wine, in similar cases, "*un remède héroïque comme dans beaucoup d'autres circonstances analogues.*" He does not say what these analogous circumstances are, but I think it is evident he alludes to those diseases in which some miasma of a poisonous nature is received into the circulation, as specific in its character as the venom of the serpent, and whose immediate effects are a sudden depression of the vital powers, exhaustion and death. A case of envenomed bite, by a serpent, was treated by Mr. Brodie and Sir E. Home in St. George's Hospital, some years ago, by very large doses of spirits of aromatic ammonia, and other powerful stimulants frequently repeated, and the application of the

pure liquor of ammonia to the wound. The constitutional effects of the poison were surmounted by this treatment: the man lived from the 17th of October to November the 4th, and died of sloughing and gangrene in the arm.

Dr. Mosely was informed, he says, by some intelligent Indians, "that any of the red peppers, such as Bird, Bell, or Cayenne pepper, powdered and taken in a glass of rum, as much as the stomach can possibly bear, so as to cause and to keep up for some time great heat and inflammation in the body, and a vigorous circulation, will stop the progress of the poison of serpents, even after its effects are visible, and that the bitten part only afterwards mortifies and separates; and that the patient, with wine, bark, and cordials, soon recovers."

The bite of the scorpion, in some parts of Venezuela, is as deadly as that of the most noxious serpent. In Jamaica it never produces death; but in delicate persons, or those of irritable temperament, the bite often produces very alarming symptoms; in fact, the very same symptoms, though in a lesser degree, than those occasioned by the bite of the cobra de capello. The symptoms described by Orfila, in a case of a man bitten by this serpent, were these sudden lancinating pains in the part bitten, extension of the pain, nausea, tremblings, faintness, convulsive twitch-

ing, and torpor. Last July, when moving into my present house, in the act of assisting to take a package from the cart, I was bitten in the ball of the thumb by a scorpion. I had suffered once before in Egypt in this way; but the pain, or the severity of the effects, was not to be compared to that which I now experienced. The sharp, sudden pain was more like that occasioned by the electric spark than any thing else. The pain gradually spread up the fore-arm; a sickening pain, which made me feel faint. I felt an odd fluttering sensation about the precordium, and slight twitches soon after about the throat and side of the chest; but the symptom of all, which gave me most uneasiness, was a fluttering, numb sensation in the tongue, which suggested the idea of paralysis, and I must say the fear of; for I never before was aware of the tongue becoming similarly affected from the bite of the scorpion. My landlady immediately after the bite applied an antidote for all venomous bites, which every Creole woman keeps in her house—an infusion literally of scorpions in rum. The Italians say, "*un diavolo scaccia un altro*;" the Creoles think that what is poison in the living animal is physic in the dead one. It did me no good, however, and I lost no time to pay my old friend and doctress, Madame Sanette Lavalsiere, a visit. Madame, like all decent practitioners, said not a word con-



demnatory of the preceding treatment; she only shook her head, and groaned a little, in Creole French, removed the dressing, and rubbed the part with indigo for some time, giving me at the same time to understand, in a quarter of an hour I would be cured; and saying this like a wise and resolute physician, who inspires confidence in his patient by seeming to have no lack of it in himself.

The inhabitants of the Western World have fortunately an antidote to the bites of the most venomous serpents in the plant vejucó guaco: the former word signifies a withe, the latter is the name of a species of hawk, which feeds upon serpents; which name has been given to a plant that this hawk is in the habit of going to when wounded in its conflicts with the serpents. Humboldt saw its efficacy tried in two instances. A Mr. Higson of this city, a gentleman who has travelled much in South America, and whose authority is not to be disputed, saw its efficacy put to the test on several occasions, and it always succeeded. From all the accounts given of it by those who have seen its wonderful effects, I should say it is one of the most valuable plants in the Western World. Humboldt calls it guaco mikania. It was first discovered by a negro, who afterwards made a practice of handling the most venomous snakes, and with perfect impunity.

Humboldt observed, that when he pointed a stick moistened at the end with a tincture of the guaco, the serpent invariably turned away its head; but while he pointed a stick without the guaco, it did not move. The negroes and Indians, before they handle a snake, inoculate themselves in four or five places with the guaco; and also take some spoonsful internally of a tincture of it, and, when bitten, immediately apply the chewed or dried leaf to the bite.

There are various kinds of fish in the West Indies which are occasionally poisonous; and it is commonly considered that they become so from the substances they may happen to feed upon; an opinion which is probably erroneous. The symptoms produced by the poison of the several kinds of deleterious fish are pretty much the same as those of cholera, but attended with cuticular irritation and eruptions.

The gray snapper (*coracinus fuscus*) is occasionally poisonous; the conger-eel likewise: in 1791 several persons were poisoned in Grenada by eating of this fish;—the negroes, it was observed, who had partaken of it, suffering more gastric derangement than the whites; a circumstance I should have expected, from the greater irritability of the negro stomach, which I have elsewhere had occasion to notice: the *mal d'estomac*, peculiar to them, is a proof of the susceptibility of that

organ to disease. King-fish, *scomber maximus*, is at certain seasons considered poisonous in Jamaica.

Baracuta at Antigua is reckoned poisonous, and I believe is so from all accounts; yet in the adjacent islands—it is a wholesome fish. This is no proof of the substances it feeds on in the locality of Antigua being of a poisonous nature. Humboldt has remarked, in his South American Travels, that the animals of the same country even, differ often very widely in their nature. In some rivers the caymans are innoxious, in others the reverse; it is the same with the venomous reptiles; but Humboldt does not ascribe this phenomenon to any difference in their food.

Burrows, the best authority on the subject of the poison of certain fishes, is of opinion that the poison depends not on the substances on which they feed, such as the marine productions, *corulina opuntia*, *hippomane mancinella*, or on copper-banks, but on a particular alteration in the secreted fluids, and in the functions at particular periods of these animals,—an alteration which disposes them singularly to speedy putrefaction. It may be well objected to the common opinion as to the mineral origin of this poison, that in the waters where these copper-banks are said to exist, no trace of the metal is to be detected in the waters; and fish that has been caught at sea, hundreds of miles



from shore, has been found as poisonous as that taken on the banks in question. There can be no doubt, however, of the poisonous nature of the various moluscæ which attach themselves to the copper-sheathing of vessels; for here, as it has been observed by Orfila, a large part of their surface is in actual contact with verdigrease: but this is not the case with the other fish I have mentioned; and I think the poison of them may be, with far greater probability of truth, referred to a tendency to putrefaction, arising from some depravity in the secretions at particular periods. Any description of fish in a hot climate, when tainted, becomes poisonous; and, in various hot countries, I have heard of accidents arising from the use of fish that had been long kept; and, in one instance to my own knowledge, in Dami-etta, producing the same urticary eruption and numbness of the extremities, which most frequently is observed in those who have eaten of fish that has been discovered to be poisonous.

Of the poisonous plants in this country, to enumerate even the names would occupy many pages. They abound; and the qualities of some of them are better known to the negroes than the whites. Those who think badly of the negroes speak badly of them; and among the worst things they say of them, is their recourse to the coward's remedy for open wrongs—unavowed revenge. They charge

them with secret assassinations—that extreme length of dishonourable hatred which goes beyond the limits of oral murder, but not beyond the aim of insidious slander. They accuse them of practising on white men's lives—of poisoning their masters in the security of their own dwellings. That such perfidy did exist in former times, I believe,—nay, I know, from the lips of an old obeah practiser, that it did exist; but it existed at a time when it was lawful to cut off a man's foot for absenting himself from his master's home,—to slit up his nose for harbouring a runaway,—to cut off his ears for stealing a goat,—and, for a capital offence, to stake him to the ground, and burn him at a slow fire, or hang him in chains, and prolong the agonies of expiring nature for days together; barbarities which have been practised within half a century, and the details of which I have read with my own eyes, in the original record-book of the trials of this period. Some of the friends of the negroes, however, deny that poisoning was ever practised in these countries by the slaves. I agree with them that it was not practised to the extent that has been stated; but that instances have occurred, in which obnoxious overseers and other white persons have been removed by these atrocious means, I have no doubt. The times were barbarous, and the negroes were not the only people whose savagery conformed to them. The negroes

have a great disinclination to speak on the subject of obeah, or of poisons.

The gall of the alligator they esteem a virulent poison. A plant called whangra, used by obeah men, is of a deleterious quality.

They speak of a poison which may be concealed under the nail, which could be administered by merely putting the finger into any liquid for an instant. It is a curious circumstance, that the lower classes of the Irish have a superstitious idea that "the black" under the nail is a poison. Whether the negro poison, described by Phillips in his *African Voyages* in 1694, is of a description similar to that known to the negroes in the West Indies, is doubtful. Phillips says, the quantity of it necessary to produce death, in one case, will cost the price of four slaves.

Negroes are said to have frequently committed suicide, by the practice of "dirt-eating." I believe those who practise it are, in all cases, labouring under a disease of the stomach, which depraves its functions. The clay they chiefly eat, is a species of marl, white and friable,—a greasy soluble earth, which Brown says, is "the most certain poison, and, when used for any length of time, is so absorbed in the circulation, as to obstruct all the minor capillaries of the body, and to be found even concreted in the glands, and the smaller vessels of the lungs, so as to be sensibly



perceptible to the touch." It is probable that the knowledge of many of the poisons of these islands has been derived from the natives by the Ma-rooms: one of the Charaib poisons was extracted from a climbing plant, which was pre-eminently termed bejuque—the Charaib word for liane. That prepared from the juice of the Manchioneel-tree was formerly used by the natives for poisoning their arrows. Tavernier states, that the Indians, by concentrating their poisons more or less, could cause death to ensue at any desired period: the negroes are said to have had the same power. According to Ramusio, the most virulent of the poisons in use amongst them was the ejected saliva of a particular serpent, when irritated. The barbarous use of poisonous arrows was never had recourse to, perhaps, on an occasion less to be regretted than when the first Spaniard in the New World, the Count of Fogeda, fell by a poisoned arrow in pursuit of gold.

The sensitive grass plant which abounds here, according to Piso, is one of the poisons which kill slowly, "making people cachectical, short-winded, and melancholy till they die."

The Manchioneel-tree, Raynal calls the most deadly in its poison: it generally grows on the sea-shore, and renders the water of a dark-brown colour, for a considerable space in its vicinity; which colour arises from the tanning, and not from

any poisonous ingredient, as is commonly imagined. It is said the poison, which is the milky juice that exudes through incisions from between the bark and the trunk, when dried, preserves its deleterious properties for a hundred years. The Indians used it for their arrows: the rain that drops from the leaves after a shower, is said to raise blisters on the skin; and the air is so contaminated underneath its branches, that it is dangerous to sleep under its shade. Humboldt perceived the faint, sickly smell of its malaria at some distance from it: the great antidote to this poison is salt.

Cassava, the flour of the Manioc or *Jatropha Manihot*, is prepared from the tuberose root of the plant. In its raw state it is an acrid poison. When the roots attain their proper size, they are plucked up; they are scraped, washed and grated: the poisonous principle is in all probability destroyed by the process of roasting the coarse grains: in this state the flour is converted into cakes; and thus an active poison becomes an article of wholesome diet. Brown says that salt of wormwood is a sure antidote to the poison of the Manioc. The roots yield a quantity of starch called tapioca, which is exported by the Brazilians in large grains. The common *Acacia* or *Aca-see* bush, which abounds in the lowlands, and goes here by the name of Cashaw, is productive of

more fatal accidents to cattle than any other plant. In dry weather the cattle feed on the tender shoots without injury, though the milk is supposed to be rendered rank by this food: horses likewise in dry weather may be fed with impunity on the pods, of which they are extremely fond, with impunity, provided they do not get water for some hours afterwards. Brown says the pods are impregnated with a sticky astringent gum, which may be easily extracted. In Egypt there is a preparation made from the immature pods of the Acacia, called *Acacia veravel*, which is used as a demulcent. There are a variety of opinions here as to the nature of the poison of the Cashaw pods. Some say that the germ of the beans develop themselves in the stomach of the horses: there is one thing very certain, that in dry weather, and when the horse is kept for some time without water, the poison is inert: when the poison has begun to act, I have known strong lime-water produce immediate relief; but frequently there is no time for the remedy. I purchased a horse of my friend Capt. O. of a Thursday in perfect health, and on Saturday he was dead, from eating Cashaws. There is a plant more suddenly destructive to horses than the Cashaws—namely, Nightshade, which I have seen produce fatal effects in the course of half an hour. There are farriers who pretend to have an infallible antidote to

this poison. In the first instance a very strong solution of common salt should be administered.

In my next letter I will give you some account of the superstitious practices and incantations connected with the use of ingredients generally *supposed* to be of a poisonous nature.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXVII.

O B E A H.  

---

TO DR. WEBSTER.

Kingston, Sept. 8, 1834.

My dear Sir,

An obeah man was lately committed to the Spanish Town prison for practising on the life of a negro child. It appeared in evidence that he went to a negro hut, and asked for some fire to light his pipe; that he was seen to put some *bush* (herb) into the pipe, and then placing himself to windward of the child, commenced smoking, so that the fumes were directed by the wind towards the child. Immediately after he went away, the child was taken alarmingly ill: the father pursued the man suspected of obeahing, and brought him back. He was accused of being an obeah man, of having injured the child; and being threatened with violence if he did not take off the obeah, he consented to do so, and accordingly performed certain ceremonies for that purpose: the child improved



and he was suffered to depart. The improvement however was only temporary: he was again sent for, and with a similar result.

I have copied the account of his examination by the attorney-general, from the original document. He confessed that he was a practiser of obeah; that he did it not for gain or vengeance, but solely because the devil put it into his head to do bad. He had learned the use of the bush from an old negro man on — estate, where master had been poisoned by old man. It was a small plant which grew in the mountains, but did not know the name of it: (he gave some of the dried leaves to the attorney, who showed them to me for examination; but they were so broken that nothing was to be made of them). He said it did him no hurt to smoke this plant; but whoever breathed the smoke was injured by it: he had no spite against the father or mother of the child, no wish to injure them. He saw the child, and he could not resist the instigation of the devil to obeah it; but he hoped he would never do it any more: he would pray to God to put it out of his head to do it. Such was the singular statement made to the attorney-general by the prisoner; and the attorney informed me, made with an appearance of frankness and truth which gave a favourable impression of its veracity.

My opinion of this case was, that notwithstand-



ing the confession of the man, and the evidence against him, the plant was innoxious in the way it was administered. I did not conceive it possible to smoke a poisonous substance with impunity, which was yet capable, when the fumes of it were only partially inhaled by another, to produce fatal effects. The man's own confession however was subjected to my opinion. The confession appeared to me to be of less importance than the evidence against him. There was hardly an unfortunate witch hanged in England or Scotland for many a year, that was not convicted chiefly on her own confession ; and it need not be stated how such confessions were obtained. On further inquiry into this case, I discovered that the threat of the torture of thumb-screwing had been had recourse to by the father of the child and other negroes before the confession was made. But why should an innocent man persist in a confession of guilt extorted from him in a moment of terror, when he is no longer subjected to its tyranny? To this I answer—The impression of great terror is not so easily effaced, even by the removal of the cause that inspired it ; the importance of the means in self-defence adopted for its dissipation becomes an exaggerated sentiment, which dupes the enfeebled mind, and actually converts a deceit into a delusion. It was said by Warren Hastings, when he listened to his impeachment in the House of Commons,

that such was the overwhelming effect of the language in which the atrocities ascribed to him were couched by his accuser, that he actually believed himself at the time the guilty wretch he was represented to be. If such an effect could be produced for a moment on the mind of an enlightened man, by an accusation that involved not life or limb, a graver accusation that placed both in jeopardy might well have a permanent influence on the uncultivated intellect. The man was not prosecuted.

A negro was brought before me and Dr. Maglashan, one of the local magistrates, previous to August, charged with obeahing the only child of a negro woman, after having caused the death of three others of her children. The mother gave her evidence in a state of great excitement; several of her female neighbours confirmed it, and it amounted to this—that the prisoner's wife had no children, and was jealous of the complainant on this account; that she had persuaded her husband to obeah her children one after another, till they had all died, and had now put obeah on herself, in order to prevent her having any more.

Dr. Maglashan took the utmost pains to soothe her excitement, and persuade her of the error she was labouring under.

Here there was no charge of poisoning, but of

killing by the supernatural agency of obeah : I also endeavoured to convince her of the delusion ; but it was only when I called on the man to declare, that even if he had the power to put obeah on her, which was impossible, he would never do it, that she appeared at all satisfied, or the friends who accompanied her. In this instance the man bore an excellent character, and there was no earthly ground for the charge : nevertheless, in former years he might have been hanged on such a charge, for an obeah man. The excellent old gentleman, whose name I had occasion to mention in this case, has since died : happy would it be for Jamaica, if the local magistracy consisted solely of persons like this venerable man ; for one more humane, more intelligent, and in every respect more efficient than this gentleman, who, I believe, was one of the oldest inhabitants of St. Andrews, I have not met with. There are two descriptions of obeah ; one that is practised by means of incantations ; and the other, by the administering of medicated potions—in former times, it is said of poisons, and these practitioners were called myal men.

A negro was tried some years ago at Spanish Town, for practising obeah, under the following circumstances : Dr. ——— being about to get married, a person of colour, who up to this period had been his housekeeper, had recourse



to an obeah man, to break the Doctor's attachment to his betrothed lady: suspicion of what was going on brought the Doctor to the house; and on his entrance, he found the customary obeah dance going on, both repeating incantations,—the necessary part of the ceremony, ablutions, and the administering of a potion having taken place. In this dance the principal part of the initiated person's vesture is dispensed with: there was an iron pot in the centre of the room, round which the dancing was going on, and in it was a cock's head, serpents' eggs, blood, and grave dirt. The principal facts were deposed to on the trial, by the Doctor: the man was condemned for life to the workhouse, and he died in jail about 1827. Many instances of this kind, and under similar circumstances, have occurred.

In the criminal record-book of the parish of St. Andrews, I find the following obeah cases:—

1773. Sarah, tried “for having in her possession cats' teeth, cats' claws, cats' jaws, hair, beads, knotted cords, and other materials, relative to the practice of obeah, to delude and impose on the minds of the negroes.”—Sentenced to be transported.

1776. Solomon, “for having materials in his possession for the practice of obeah.”—To be transported.

1777. Tony, “for practising obeah, or witchcraft, on a slave named Fortune, by means of

which, said slave became dangerously ill."—Not Guilty.

1782. Neptune, "for making use of rum, hair, chalk, stones, and other materials, relative to the practice of obeah, or witchcraft."—To be transported.

The description of the ingredients in the above indictments, made use of in these African incantations, reminds one forcibly of the ingredients for the charmed cauldron of the Weird sisters—

" Fillet of a fenny snake,  
In the cauldron boil and bake :  
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,  
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,  
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble :"

while the dancing round the iron pot of the obeah man and his associates recalls the pranks of the old beldames who

and " Round about the cauldron go,"

" In the poison'd entrails throw."

One of the necessary ingredients for the obeah ceremony, is either the head, feathers, or claws of a fowl ; but there is nothing held in so much estimation for obeah rites, as a perfectly white

cock ; and if it happens to crow while the ceremony is going on, it is reckoned a good omen, and the fetish who presides over the ceremony is supposed to be propitiated. The omen of the African wizard resembles the one expected by the Scotch witches :—

“ Thrice *must* the brinded cat have mew'd,  
*Ere* Harper cries, 'Tis time, 'tis time !”

There are two obeah ordeals in use here, which I do not remember to have seen mentioned in any work : the first is called

#### THE BOOK ORDEAL.

To find out the person who has committed a theft, all parties present are called upon to open a Bible, 10th chapter of Kings : they then place a key between the leaves, and tie it in the closed book with a slender thread ; the key is held between the tips of the two second fingers ; the book is then struck after a portion of the 50th psalm has been read, and if the person is present who committed the theft, the key will remain in the hands of the holder, and the book will fall to the ground. This is a singular instance of an African superstition engrafted on Christianity.

#### THE BROOM ORDEAL

is practised by cementing two layers of light



broom, with ashes mixed with water: the suspected person is then placed on a stool, and calls on God to show who is the guilty person. The slight broom wicker is then pressed round his throat: if it happens to give way, it is a proof that he is innocent; but if the pressure should cause him to fall from the stool, that circumstance is an evidence of his guilt.

Obeah is evidently a practice of Oriental origin. In my *Eastern Travels*, in speaking of the Jewish sorcerers, I have stated that the Hebrew word Shoelobh, 'a consulter with familiar spirits,' signifies also 'Pytho, or the spirit of divination;' obh, signifying 'a bottle,' which was probably made use of in divining. In Bryant's *Mythology*, in his etymology of this word, there are the following remarks:—"A serpent in the Egyptian language was called ob, or aub." "The woman of Endor was termed Oub or Ob, translated Pythonissa." "And Oubaïos was the name of the basilisk or royal serpent, the emblem of the sun, and an ancient oracular deity of Africa." Edwards's observations on the derivation of this word deserve attention:—"The general term," he says, "in Jamaica, denotes those Africans who in that island practise witchcraft or sorcery; comprehending, also, the class of what are called myal men, or those who, by means of a narcotic potion, made with the juice of a herb said to be the

branched callalu,—a species of solanum, which occasions a trance, or profound sleep of a certain duration,—endeavour to convince the deluded spectators of their power to re-animate dead bodies.” The influence of the terror of obeah over the negroes some twenty or thirty years ago, was almost incredible: even at the present time it is greatly dreaded by the least instructed of the negroes. In this, as in many other matters, the exertions of the missionaries have been evidently beneficial to the negroes: obeah no longer has the power of producing mischief to the extent it formerly did. The dread of it is greatest amongst the Africans. Some of the Creole negroes affect to laugh at it; but when I have seen their courage put to the test when they have been menaced with obeah, or they think it has been set for them, the old superstition takes possession of their fears. When I lived in St. Andrews, in one of my morning rambles between my house and Mr. Hall’s, I found a piece of dirty rag tied up like a bag, about the size of a walnut. It contained some dried brown leaves broken into small bits, shreds of red wood rolled up, mixed with hair and some dirt. This was obeah that in all probability had been set for some person. I took it home and had it placed over the door of an old Mulatto woman,—a very troublesome old lady, who carried water for us, and who had a

mortal aversion for Johnny Crows whenever she was indisposed. Her antipathy to this black angel of death, Captain Mason and myself were often in the habit of rallying her about: one day she lost patience, and told me it was only for buckra the Johnny Crows were flapping their big wings.

The Johnny Crows made me feel the less repugnance to give the old woman a fright in order to give the other negroes a lesson: the dirty bag of evil augury was placed over her door so conspicuously that it was sure to be discovered. It was discovered. A volley of moans and groans, and devotional-ejaculations, gave us intimation of her having found it: "Her enemies had found her out: they had set obi for her; it could be placed there for nobody else." The other negroes were nearly as much frightened, with the exception of a servant-boy who was in the secret. I soon relieved the old lady's apprehensions after some time, on the score of being obeahed; but if it were not for the boy's testimony, I think she would hardly have believed me: as it was, it was very difficult to convince her of the folly of her fears.

The fetish is the African divinity, invoked by the negroes in the practice of obeah. When they take an oath, they say they "take the fetish;" and when they worship, they "make fetish." I

believe the word is peculiar to the dialect of Guinea, and signifies 'a charm or incantation,' as well as a divinity.

They have a singular idea that, if they swear falsely on the fetish, their stomachs will burst, their faces will be scratched, and their fingers will drop off; and, what is still more, a great many of them have the same apprehension, coupled with their ideas of the obligation of an oath in the Christian Scriptures. A Mrs. Panther, a whited-brown lady, brought a negro girl before me, to give evidence against one of her apprentices. I inquired of her if the girl, who was about seventeen or eighteen, knew the nature of an oath? She seemed a little hurt at a question which, she thought, implied a doubt of the girl's being duly instructed. I repeated the question, however; and, to the great discomfiture of Mrs. Panther, and the no small surprise of a crowded court, the poor girl replied, "Massa, if me swear false, my stomach (I will not vouch for this word) would burst, my face would be scratched, and my fingers drop off." I could not avoid complimenting her mistress on the result of the pains that had been taken with the poor girl's improvement, and the case was dismissed for want of better testimony.

I have heard the same idea expressed respecting the obligation of an oath on two other occasions. The negro Sharp, who was one of the chief

planners of the late rebellion, reluctantly confessed the part he had taken in the conspiracy, and the form of oath administered to the negroes, when they came to be sworn in, at a house on Retrieve estate, some weeks before Christmas. A bible was brought, and put on the table. The person to be sworn got up and said, "If ever I witness any thing against my brother and sister concerning this matter, may hell be my portion!"

Edwards mentions a mode of administering an oath, which, I heard, in the late rebellion was practised by the negroes, either by the immediate descendants of Africans, or those not attached to the religious societies of any Christian sect.

"Human blood, and earth taken from the grave of some near relative, are mixed with water, and given to the party to be sworn; who is compelled to drink the mixture, with an imprecation that it may cause the belly to burst, and the bones to rot, if the truth be not spoken. This test is frequently administered to their wives, on the suspicion of infidelity; and the resemblance which it bears to the trial of jealousy, by the bitter water, described in the book of Numbers, is a curious and striking circumstance."

Formerly, the influence of obeah practitioners was very great over the negroes. Hundreds have died of the mere terror of being under the ban of obeah. A little bag, with a few trumpery and



harmless ingredients, hung up over a door, was sufficient to break down the health and spirits of the stoutest-hearted African. The Koromantyn rebel who was capable of facing death in its most appalling form without a murmur, has been often driven into rebellion by the terror of an obeah bag, and an intimation that he had not taken the fetish, or the oath of fidelity to a new conspiracy. In 1760, an obeah instigator to rebellion was put to death. During the twenty years subsequent to this period, a great many negroes were hanged for obeah crimes. Those charged with them were generally old, mis-shapen, or deformed negroes, of African origin. In the slave law, passed 1831, the capital crime of obeah is defined to be, the administering of any poisonous or deleterious ingredient, such as pounded glass, although death may not ensue therefrom.

But the ingredients that are now in use for obeah purposes are harmless substances: cats' claws, parrots' beaks, grave dirt, &c. strung up in little bags, over people's doors; and the charmers are generally old women, whose wrinkles are their chief titles to the character of wise women. So long as these poor bodies were hanged and flagellated for the exercise of their African sorcery, obeah flourished—like some other things, which, the more they are persecuted, the more they prosper; but when humanity came to the aid of legis-

lative wisdom, and softened down some of the most prominent barbarities of former enactments—that especially respecting obeah, the practice was deprived of the principal source of the reverence it exacted, when the exposure of its absurdities was divested of the cruelties which made a merit, in former times, of persisting in them. But though judicial barbarities were practised in Jamaica within the last forty years, which have been unknown to Europe for upwards of a century, and executions for witchcraft or obeah, and torturing practices (though not by course of law, by means of thumb-screws,) been had recourse to,—even much later, instances have occurred in Great Britain, within the last thirty years, in which the mob have endeavoured to revive the savagery of the law, and have taken into their own hands the punishment of the crime of witchcraft. Dragging an unfortunate old woman through a pond—pelting another with stones, till nearly murdered, have been practised with impunity. Sir Walter Scott mentions an instance known to himself:—"In a remote part of the Highlands, an ignorant and malignant woman seemed to have meditated the destruction of her neighbour's property, by placing in a cowhouse, or byre, as we call it, a pot of baked clay containing locks of hair, parings of nails, and other trumpery. This precious spell

was discovered, the design conjectured, and the witch would have been torn to pieces, had not a high-spirited lady in the neighbourhood gathered some of her people, and, by main force, taken the unfortunate creature out of the hands of the populace."

The last execution in Scotland for witchcraft was in 1722. "The victim," Sir W. Scott says, "was an insane old woman belonging to the parish of Loth, who had so little idea of her situation as to rejoice at the sight of the fire which was destined to consume her. She had a daughter lame of both hands and feet,—a circumstance attributed to the witch's having been used to transform her into a pony, and to get her shod by the devil."

Hundreds of poor negroes, I am convinced, have been executed in Jamaica for witchcraft equally weak in intellect. The Africans, like all other people who profess the Mahometan faith, have an opinion that insanity and supernatural inspiration are frequently combined, and, consequently, knaves and lunatics (partially insane) are commonly the persons who play the parts of santons and sorcerers. The Africans carried most of their superstitions to our colonies, and, amongst others, their reverence for those, either whose physical or mental peculiarities distin-

guished them from the multitude,—and such were the persons who, in advanced age, usually took on themselves the obeah character. It is evident to any medical man who reads these trials, that in the great majority of cases the trumpery ingredients used in the practice of obeah were incapable of producing mischief except on the imagination of the person intended to be obeahed.

The miserable sorcery, however, in too many instances, proved fatal to its victims as well as to its practisers. Ignorance was essential to slavery; and no pains were spared, which human ingenuity could devise, to keep the negro from enlightenment, which is the door to liberty. But one might have expected a little more allowance for the crimes which sprung out of that necessary state of ignorance, than one finds exhibited in the criminal records of this colony some thirty years ago. Of late years, I freely admit, that the criminal code has undergone great changes for the better; and that few evidences of its former sanguinary character are to be found, or any of those instances of mutilation and dismemberment which formerly disgraced its records: nay, more—I am inclined to think, from all I have witnessed, that in the criminal courts, the same crimes with which negroes stood charged in this colony, would

be visited in England with far greater rigour. I have not seen an instance in the superior courts in which negroes have not had a fair and impartial trial; and in that court over which the chief-justice presides, so far as depends on Sir Joshua Rowe, the attorney-general, and the gentlemen of the bar, in the trials that take place, if there is any bias, I believe it is in favour of the negroes. But where the negro is the complainant, and the white man the defendant, I have seen the firmness and the ability of the chief-justice, the zealous exertions of the attorney-general, and the able advocacy of such men at the bar as Panton and Walkis, of no avail, and right and justice completely set aside, when the question of the power of those of a privileged complexion came before a jury of the same favoured class of the community.

Before the inferior tribunals under the old law, in all matters between negro and negro, justice, I freely admit, was fairly administered; but wherever injustice or undue severity was complained of by the negro, I must say, in almost every instance that came to my knowledge, in which a white person of any standing in society was the defendant, the disposition of the court was highly unfavourable to the complainant—utterly opposed to impartial justice.



I might adduce particular instances in support of my assertions, but I have limited myself to the statement of general inferences from facts within my own experience.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXVIII.

ORIGIN OF SLAVERY.

---

MONSIEUR JULIEN, OF PARIS.

Kingston, Sept. 12, 1834.

My dear Sir,

I am desirous of complying with your request respecting the information you wish for on the subject of slavery, and I am the more anxious to do so, as you intimated in your letter, that the information you seek for, you hope to make subservient to the cause of humanity in your own colonies. I am very sorry to tell you that humanity is still very grossly outraged in them. The more I have inquired of your countrymen here, into the condition of the slaves in your colonies, the more reason I have to believe that your countrymen are not more fit to be trusted with the exercise of unlimited power over their fellow men, than those of any other European nation. In saying this I do not depend on hear-say evidence only, but on inferences from my own

experience; and so far from being influenced by any foolish prejudice against the people I speak of, I assure you all my prepossessions are strongly in favour of that brave and generous nation.

I think it important, that one possessed of so much influence among the leading men of your country should have accurate intelligence of the condition of the slaves in our colonies, under the great change which has lately taken place; and that you should not be imposed upon by names which sound well, but do not signify what they are intended to express. Slavery is to be abolished in our colonies in the year 1840, but in the mean time, it virtually exists under another name, and that name is Apprenticeship. Before I enter on this subject, I think it advisable to refer to those authorities on which slavery grounds its legal character with us: they are similar to those on which the infamous system rests its "sacred rights" with you; with the difference, that your countrymen have a Pope's bull to refer to, for the first sanction of slavery, while my countrymen have only a King's patent, for the legality of that system with them. We must not, I suppose, put a King in competition with a Pope; but it is possible that the sanction of a Stuart, and that of an Eugenius, are about equally venerated by both our countrymen. The subject of slavery in your colonies must soon force itself on the attention of

your government; but neither your government, nor any other, will undertake the removal of any great abuse of privilege or power, that has the hoar of antiquity on the head of its enormities, if it is not impelled by the force of public opinion, and the impulse to its enlightenment be given with an energy that will suffer no ministry to doubt its momentum.

The world, Monsieur Julien, does not understand that anomaly which characterised the institutions of some of those ancient countries, the people of which were the most jealous of their liberties of all other nations, and the most tyrannical in their treatment to their slaves. We are not living in days of refined barbarity, when liberty requires the foil of slavery to bring out its brightness. We have no feelings in common with the proud oppressors, who denied the possession of natural rights to uncivilised nations; though the countrymen of either of us act in our colonies as if we had: we however have taken the first step to redeem our colonial character. Oppression, I believe, is no less hateful to your high-spirited people, than it is detestable to us; and I cannot think the abhorrence the French have shown of it, on a recent memorable occasion, is merely a question of locality, and that despotic tyranny is intolerable in France—but is not only endurable, but justifiable, in Martinique.

The history of slavery in modern times commences in 1442, when the Portuguese received certain negro slaves from the Moors, in lieu of some prisoners of war that had been given up by Prince Henry. About this time the introduction of slaves into Portugal was sanctioned by a bull of Pope Eugenius IV.

In a short time the Portuguese fitted out an expedition for Africa: they built forts along the African coast; and the king of Portugal took the title of the lord of Guinea—he might have added, the king of the kidnappers. The forts were taken by the Dutch in 1638, a little later by the English, and in 1678 by the French—and not only taken, but destroyed. In 1685, the Elector of Brandenburg established three settlements on the Gold Coast, under the direction of the first chartered company. These settlements proved unsuccessful: in 1717 they were sold to a Dutch company: France again took possession of them and retained them till 1763, when England at that time took possession of Senegal, and confined the French from Cape Blanco to the Gambier. In 1502, the Spaniards in the West Indies having greatly exhausted the native Indian population, began to turn their attention to Africa, for negro slaves to work in the mines; and their attention was directed to it by Las Casas, the amiable bishop of Chiapa, on a very short-sighted



notion of philanthropy—that of making distant objects the victims of atrocity, in order to relieve the sufferings of those within his sight. In 1517 the Emperor Charles V. granted a patent to some Genoese merchants, for an annual supply of 4000 negroes: from this time, the infamous traffic was regularly established. From the time of the discovery of the New World, Columbus was not only the zealous advocate of slavery, but the actual agent of slavery himself. Almost all his historians attempt to gloss over this disgraceful conduct of the great discoverer, and one of the ablest of them, Washington Irving, among others: he lived, it is said, in a dark age; he conformed only to the spirit of the times; he shared the errors of the greatest people of the time, who looked upon pagans as wretches, out of the pale of humanity, whom it was lawful to enslave. All this is not only destitute of truth, but its erroneousness is evident from the very statement of those who make these assertions: Columbus possessed the great faculty of inventive genius, his energy was commensurate with his ambition; and it is evident, from all his stipulations with the courts he treated with, that he was ambitious of wealth and power, as well as glory; but so far from being in advance of the enlightenment of his age, it is plain he was very far behind it. It is a curious fact, that among the very persons whom his historians have

branded as ignorant bigots for their enmity to Columbus, were men who had openly denounced slavery, and reprobated the Admiral for the part he had taken in it. The people whose slavery Columbus advocated throughout his whole career, were those very Indians whom he speaks of in his journal written for the perusal of his sovereigns, as a people "who love their neighbours as themselves: their discourse is even sweet and gentle, and accompanied by a smile: (and he continues,) I swear to Your Majesties there is not in the world a better nation or a better land." But it was not long before he remitted, says Washington Irving, with "all the gold he could collect, specimens of fruits and valuable plants, 500 Indian captives to be sold as slaves. It is painful (he adds) to find the glory of Columbus sullied by such violations of the laws of humanity; *but the customs of the times must plead his apology.*"

But that the people of the times had some feelings of respect for human rights is evident, from the course pursued by Isabella: "the Queen ordered that the Indians should be taken back to their native country." Nevertheless, when he returned to Spain, "he carried with him several Indians, decorated with glittering ornaments, and, amongst them, the brother of Caonabo, on whom he put a massive collar, and chain of gold weighing 600 castillanos." When the destruction of the Indians

began to effect the working of the mines, the same authority tells us, "he proposed to transport to Hispaniola, for a limited term of years, all criminals condemned to banishment or the galleys, excepting such as had committed atrocious crimes." This historian admits his recommendation proved "a fruitful source of misery and disaster to the colony," while Robertson insinuates that judicial decisions at home were influenced by the suggestion of colonisation advantages. The soundness of his colonial policy is of a piece with his financial views and theological opinions: of both the latter we have a sample in the following passage from Irving's history: "In his anxiety to lessen the expenses of the colony, and procure revenue to the crown, he recommended that the natives of the Caribbean islands being cannibals, and ferocious invaders of their peaceful neighbours, should be captured, and sold as slaves, or exchanged with merchants for live stock and other necessary supplies." And what is the avowed object of making them slaves?—the making Christians of them! and moreover the acquisition of means, the proposed end of his discoveries, that "should be consecrated to a crusade for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre from the power of the infidels." Was this in the spirit of the tenth or fifteenth century, when unfavorable representations continued to be sent home against him, by the friar Boyle and



Margarite, of tyranny and oppression—by Roldan and others, of conferring grants of Indians, male and female, on his favorites? Columbus after signing a solemn treaty with this same Roldan, “wrote home,” says Irving, “by this opportunity, to his sovereigns, giving it as his opinion that the agreement he had made with the rebels was by no means obligatory to the crown, having been in a manner extorted by violence. He repeated his request, that a learned man might be sent out as a judge, and desired moreover that discreet persons might be appointed to form a council, and others for certain fiscal employments, *entreating however that their powers might be so limited and defined*, as not to interfere with his dignities and privileges. Roldan’s representations, however, were not only listened to, but believed by Isabella. Her sensibility as a woman, and her dignity as a queen, were instantly in arms. ‘What right,’ exclaimed she, indignantly, ‘has the Admiral to give away my vassals?’ She immediately ordered all the Indians to be restored to their homes—nay, more, she commanded that those who had formerly been sent to Spain, should be re-shipped to Hispaniola. Unfortunately for Columbus, at this very juncture, in one of his letters he advised the continuance of Indian slavery for some time longer, as a measure important to the welfare of the colony.”

In short, the character of that man who in his own time history holds up as "the foremost man of all the world," is thus summed up by the most eloquent and ardent of his admirers:—"It cannot be denied that his piety was mingled with superstition, and darkened by the bigotry of the age. He evidently concurred in the opinion that all nations who did not acknowledge the Christian faith were destitute of natural rights, and that the sternest measures might be used for their conversion, and the severest punishments inflicted upon them if obstinate in unbelief. In this spirit of bigotry he considered himself justified in making captures of the Indians, and transporting them to Spain, to have them taught the doctrines of Christianity, and in selling them for slaves if they pretended to resist his invasions."

It is singular that "the bigotry of the age" did not seem to influence the members and missionaries of that church which is said to be so inimical to liberty. Las Casas, Montesinos, Ximenes, Boyle, the whole of the Dominican missionaries who were contemporaries with Colúmbus, stood up for the right of their fellow-creatures.

"In conformity," says Robertson, "with the mild spirit of that religion which they were employed to publish, the missionaries early remonstrated against the maxims of the planters with respect to the Americans, and condemned the



repartimientos, or distributions, by which they were given up as slaves to their conquerors, as no less contrary to natural justice and the precepts of Christianity, than to sound policy. The Dominicans, regardless of such political and interested considerations, would not relax, in any degree, the rigour of their sentiments; and even *refused to absolve or admit to the sacrament such of their countrymen as continued to hold the natives in servitude!*"

If Las Casas, in his despair of ameliorating the condition of the Indians, suggested the employment of slaves from a distant land, he never could have contemplated the extent of the evil, or the practicability of the scheme in question. That he was sincere in his advocacy of the rights of the Indians, is demonstrated by the fact that he relinquished, as we are told by Herrera, his share of the Indian captives at the distribution of the natives amongst their conquerors, protesting solemnly against the impious dominion that was exercised over his fellow-creatures.

In 1503 Herrera states the first negro slaves were sent into the New World. "Cardinal Ximenes, however," says Robertson, "when solicited to encourage this commerce, peremptorily rejected the proposition."

In 1513 Ferdinand issued a decree of his privy council, declaring "the servitude of the Indians

was warranted both by the laws of God and man." The Spaniards talked in those times of their "sacred rights," and of "the legality of the origin of slavery," as our colonists do in these days, and what was one of the earliest evidences of its legality, and of the justification of its imposition—a proclamation, in 1509, addressed by Alphonso de Ojeda to the natives, in the name of "the most high and powerful king of Castille and Leon, the conqueror of barbarous nations,"—to the effect that if they refused to become Christians, they would be exterminated: in the words of the proclamation—"But if you will not comply, or maliciously delay to obey my instructions, then, with the help of God, I will enter your country by force; I will carry on war against you with the utmost violence; I will subject you to the yoke of obedience to the Church and King; I will take your wives and children, and will make them slaves, and sell or dispose of them according to his Majesty's pleasure."

The precious patent from which this proclamation is copied was drawn up by several of the most eminent lawyers in Spain; and its importance, as a document giving the best validity that could be devised to the title of Christians, to the legal possession of unconverted barbarians, having the sanction of the King, and originating in his council, I have no hesitation in saying is as legal

a sanction for slavery as any king's patent of ours, on which we build our claim to the legal possession of stolen men, or found our sacred rights in the property of their persons.

The first ravages on the coast of Africa by Englishmen were committed by a body of adventurers under the command of an unprincipled marauder, of the name of Hawkins, who subsequently received, for his "good services," the honour of knighthood from our immaculate Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty gently reproved the robber who brought the first cargo of human beings to her dominions : it appears she was not duly informed of the value of the human commodity ; but no sooner was it known that man was money, and slave transportation a shipping interest, than her Majesty's scruples vanished all at once, the marauder was knighted, and his next plundering expedition was not only suffered, but sanctioned by her most excellent Majesty.

This first man-stealer from our country, this infamous Hawkins, having laid open his project to some capitalists, they became large contributors to his scheme, and provided him with three good ships, for the purpose of ravaging the coasts of Africa. The pirate reached Africa in 1562, and "in a short time (says Hakluyt) he got into his possession, *partly by the sword, partly*

*by other means, 300 negroes and other merchandise."*

Here is the first British authority for the system of slavery,—the first precedent, though *not by law established*, to which the man robber's advocate must refer, for the sanction that is derived from custom, though a custom which wants immemorial usage to make it legal.

The year following he got the command of one of the Queen's ships, the *Jesus*, of 700 tons, to proceed on an expedition similar to the last. It sickens one to reflect on the odious profanity of associating that blessed name with a service so revolting to the Christian character. "The selection of the ship, and the appointment of the commander, were equally worthy of her whom we consider as one of the wisest of our sovereigns, and, with equal justice, the least estimable of her sex. The expedition was dispersed in a heavy gale: one vessel took fire and blew up another: the John Baptist parted company, the captain on the discovery of Hawkins's excesses, refusing to act in concert with him.

A companion of Hawkins has given an account in Hakluyt's collection, of his second voyage. "The inhabitants (says the writer) are called *Leophares*, and are counted the goodliest men of all others saving the *Congoes*, who inhabit this side the *Cape Bueno Esperance*: they are of a nature very



loving and gentle. Here we stayed but one night and part of the day ; for the 7th of December we came away, in that intending to have taken negroes there by force : the Minion's men gave them to understand of our coming, and our pretence ; wherefore they did avoid the snares we had laid for them."

They now attacked the natives on an island called Lambula. " We stayed (continues the writer we have quoted) certain dayes, going every day on shore to take the inhabitants, with burning and spoiling of their towns." The merciless marauder made a third voyage in 1568, for the same purpose ; but the expedition happily terminated unsuccessfully. In 1609 the first charter was given to Sir Robert Rich, by James I. In 1618 the slave-trade became a regular branch of commerce ; a London company obtained a charter from James I. to trade with Guinea : but after a few years it expired. In 1631 Charles I. granted another charter for thirty-one years, and in 1655 renewed one of the charters of his predecessor. In 1662 a charter was given by Charles II., at the head of which was the Duke of York. In 1672 another charter was granted by the Crown : among the subscribers were to be found the names of the King, the heir apparent, and many of the nobility. In 1688 all other companies not authorised by parliament, were abolished. In



1689 the first assiento company was formed, but its privileges were not exclusive, as appears by 9th and 10th of William and Mary. In 1739 this company, on becoming insolvent, received a grant of £10,000 from parliament; which grant was annually made till 1747. In 1750 an Act was passed for extending and improving the trade to Africa; and no alterations appear to have been made in the system till 1807. In 1793 the possibility of the mother country abolishing the slave-trade was looked upon as a thing that was not to be dreamt of. Bryan Edwards, to whose account I am indebted for many of the preceding data, says, that no one "can hesitate for a moment to pronounce, that any attempt to prevent the introduction of slaves into our West Indian colonies, would be like that of chaining the winds, or giving laws to the ocean." These are his words; nevertheless, they proved to be mere bombast.

In 1797 Jamaica received an order from the government, to take such steps as would lead to a diminution of slave importations, and ultimately to the abolition of the traffic. To this the House of Assembly replied, that their privilege of obtaining slaves "was secured to them by several Acts of Parliament, and by several proclamations;—and they never could relinquish this their essential right."

The manner of treating the negroes on board the ships bound for the colonies, in the latter years of the trade, was somewhat less barbarous than it had at first been: Edwards mitigates the cruelty as much as possible: the slaves, he says, were merely secured in irons when they were put on board; that every two men were fastened together, the right ankle of one being locked by a small fetter to the left of the other, and, in cases of turbulence, an additional fetter on the wrists; but they were all bathed daily in salt water, men and women, it appears, by his account, children and adults, sick and sound,—all is the word, and nothing, continues the historian, could be more refreshing or agreeable. Nevertheless, he admits, that it appeared in evidence before the House of Commons, that 520 slaves have been jammed together in a vessel of 240 tons, not allowing ten inches of room to each individual. But you will feel the consolation of knowing that horrors like this, or terrors for the poor negro, like “the disgraceful scramble” for the slaves which took place at the sale on their arrival in Jamaica, which gave “the poor ignorant Africans (says Edwards) the idea that they were seized by a herd of cannibals, and were speedily to be devoured,” were of an ancient date—peradventure some forty or fifty years ago: but lay not the flattering unction of the extinction of these horrors

to your consolatory feelings—they are not extinct—they are not likely to become so, till England does something more than change the name of slavery,—and shame, and fear,—for what encouragement have we from the past, to expect any thing from justice? Compel the other slave states to abandon this vile traffic.\*

Mr. Brydges inaccurately states that England was the last European power to enter into the slave-trade, and the first to abandon it.

To the honor of Denmark be it spoken, the slave-trade was abolished by her five years before England performed that act of tardy justice to humanity. It is evident, from the preceding enumeration of royal patents and charters, that slavery with us had its origin in acts of private depredation; which, as they became profitable, excited the cupidity of the Court, and had no other sanction than the consent of the King, who first

\* The French have hitherto, I am sorry to say, kept pace with the Spaniards and Portuguese: how long will this gallant nation submit to the disgrace of treading in such steps? In 1821, eighty-six French slave-ships loaded with negroes in the river Bonny alone. In 1823, in the course of a few months thirty slave-ships were fitted out in the port of Nantz alone. The importation of slaves into Cuba has been chiefly effected under French and Portuguese flags: upwards of 100 French slave-ships have been prosecuted, from the time of the French abolition of the trade to 1823.

enriched his needy nobles with the grant of privileges on lines of coast that did not belong to him, and eventually the authorisation of another Stuart and his council, who were literally partners in the nefarious trade. It was only in the last century that Parliament recognised the trade; for it not only recognised it and assisted its chartered companies with grants of money, but even deprecated its discontinuance. The continuance of the slave-trade was first objected to by South Carolina: the Jamaica House of Assembly, in 1774, passed two Bills purporting to restrain the traffic in negroes, which were rejected by the Home government, not only because the colony was arrogating to itself a right to interfere with the commerce of the mother country, as some have stated, but on the broad ground expressed by the Minister, Lord Dartmouth, "That he never would allow the colonies to check or discourage, in any degree, a traffic so beneficial to the nation."

The origin of domestic slavery in England we do not know the date of. It existed at the time of the Norman Conquest. William the Conqueror revoked a Saxon law exempting British slaves from being carried into foreign countries; whereupon Ireland became the market of English slaves. Bristol was then what Liverpool has been in recent times—the rendezvous of the merchants embarked in the slave-trade.



The abolition of slavery in Ireland originated not with King or Parliament, but with a popish council—the ecclesiastical council of Armagh, with the bigoted priests of that intolerant church which it is the fashion to revile—who passed a resolution to enfranchise English slaves! The champions of the English church took a good while to reciprocate the liberality of the Irish council. The word slave, as applied to an English bondsman, was first used in the ninth century; the term *schiavit* being applied to the condition of a captive taken by the Sclavonian tribes. Henry VIII. enfranchised many slaves by charter. In 1574 a commission was appointed by Queen Elizabeth to take steps for the manumission of English slaves, while her Majesty's fleet was ravaging the coast of Africa for negro ones.

The transition from slavery to a state of villainage was the first improvement in the condition of the English bondsman. He still continued the property of his master, but he became a species of property that was entitled to protection from wanton cruelty or arbitrary oppression. He next advanced to the privileges of those serfs who were denominated *adscripti glebæ*, and held their grounds, not as lessees, but rather as tenants-at-will, but still subject to their masters' demands on their services. The time at length came when a



Briton ceased to be a slave in any form, and the majesty of the British people sprung up in all its strength, and shook off the flimsy trammels that it suffered in its supineness to hang about it.

I have been led into this subject so far beyond the limits I proposed to myself, that I am induced to proceed still farther, by adverting to the opinions, respecting slavery, of three of the most eminent English lawyers. The first is that of Lord Stowel, in the case of a negro woman named Grace, and perhaps is the best argument in favour of colonial slavery that ever was adduced; and as a piece of judicial reasoning, of the first order, that comprehends the whole bearings of the question of slavery,—not only as regards the authority it rested upon, but the grounds on which that great Judge considered its abolition would be justifiable,—I am tempted to lay it before you, accessible as the document may be, on account of its striking application to present circumstances. Adverting to the objections of the revival of slavery in the colonies, he says—“Slavery in Antigua was never the creature of law, but of that custom which operates with the force of law; and when it is cried out, that *malus usus abolendus est*, it is first to be proved that even in England the use of slavery is there considered as a *bad custom* in the colonies. Is it a bad custom which the privy council and the court of Chan-

cery are every day carrying into effect, in all considerations of property? Still less is it to be considered a *malus usus* in the colonies, where it is incorporated into full life and establishment, when it is the system of the state, and of every individual in it, *and fifty years have passed without any authorised condemnation of it in England, as a malus usus in the colonies.*"

"The fact is," he continues, "that villainage in England of both kinds went into actual decay of themselves: they had no connexion with any other country, and therefore it is triumphantly declared, that 'once a free man, ever a free man.'"

But slavery was a very favoured introduction into the colonies; it was deemed a great source of the mercantile interests of the country, and was on that account largely considered by the mother country as a great source of its wealth and strength. Treaties were made on that account, and the colonies were compelled to submit to those treaties, by the authority of this country. The system, instead of being condemned as a bad custom, (*malus usus*,) was regarded as a source of its riches and power. It was only at the latter part of the last century that the system was condemned in England, as an institution not fit to continue here, for reasons peculiar to our own condition; but it has been continued in our colonies,

highly favoured by our own courts, which have liberally imparted to it their encouragement and protection. To a system thus supported, I feel it too strong to apply the maxim "*malus usus abolendus est.*" The time may come when the institution may fall, as similar institutions have fallen in other countries; but I am of opinion it can only fall by the joint expense of both countries, for it is in a peculiar measure the crime of this country; and I rather feel it to be an objection to this species of emancipation, that it is intended to be a very cheap measure here, by throwing the whole expense on the colony. It has been said that the law of England discourages slavery; and it certainly does within the limits of these islands; but it uses a very different language, and exerts a very different form, when it looks to its colonies,—for *to this trade* in the colonies it gives an almost unbounded protection, and is in the habit of doing so at the present time in many exercises of public authority, and, *ever since slavery*, the authority of many statutes for the purpose of carrying it into full effect in the colonies. All the efforts of those who have contended for its abolition, and who have obtained Acts of Parliament for its regulation, have in no degree weakened the force of those English statutes.

"It has been observed, that the state has declared that all laws made in the colonies con-

tradicting its own law, shall be null and void, and cannot be put in execution; but is that the character of the colonial laws for the encouragement of the proprietors in slaves? Has not our law declared, in the most explicit and authentic manner, its encouragement of slavery in its colonial establishments? Have not innumerable Acts passed which regulate the condition of slaves, which tend to consider them, as the colonists themselves do, as *res positæ in commercio*,—as goods and chattels, subject to mortgage, constituting part of the value of the estates, as liable to be taken in execution for debt, and to be publicly sold for such purposes? And have not the highest courts in this country, the privy council and the court of Chancery, not made regulations for carrying the system into effect with most scrupulous regularity, and under the sanction of Acts of Parliament? Can any man doubt, at this day, that slaves in the colonies may not be transferred by sale made in England, and which would be affirmed, without reference to the court so empowered? and how, under the guarantee of such protection, can it be asserted that the law of England does not support, and, in a high degree, favour, the law of slavery in its West Indian colonies, however it may discourage it in the mother country? Is it not certain that this trade of the colonies has been the very favoured trade of this



country, and so continues, as far as can be judged from the encouragement given in various forms—the making of treaties, the institution of companies, the devolution from one company to another, the compulsion of the colonies to accept this traffic, and the recognition of it in a great variety of its laws? If it be a sin, it is a sin in which this country has largely shared in its guilt, and ought to bear its proportion of the redemption. How this country can decline to perform the act of justice in performing the act of charity, men of great wisdom and integrity have not been able to discover.”

It is evident, in the preceding argument, the opinion of the judge is founded on the assumption that the origin of slavery had custom only for its support, and that such custom operated with the force of law.

I find the following definition of the legal phrase *custom* in Blackstone's Commentaries, and also the description of the conditions that give custom the force of law:—"When a custom," says Blackstone, "is actually proved to exist, the next inquiry is into the legality of it, for if it is not a good custom, it ought to be no longer used. *Malus usus abolendus est*. To make a particular custom good, the following are necessary requisites." And these requisites, divested of legal phraseology, he states, are the following:—



1st. That it has been from time immemorial.

2nd. That it has been continued.

3rd. That it has been peaceable.

4th. That it must be reasonable.

5th. That it ought to be certain.

6th. That it should be consistent.

I will only ask, which of these remarks, with the exception of the second, has slavery upon it ?

The next opinion is that of Lord Mansfield, on the case of the negro *Sommerset*, who claimed his freedom in 1772, in the Court of King's Bench, being then in England, and refusing to return to slavery in the West Indies. In his judgment, Lord Mansfield observed,—“ The state of slavery is of such a nature, that it is incapable of being now introduced by courts of justice upon mere reasoning, or inferences *from any principles natural or political* ; it must take its rise from positive law : the origin of it can in no country or age be traced back to any other source. Immemorial usage preserves the memory of positive law long after all traces of the occasion, reason, and authority, and time of its introduction, are lost, and, in a case so odious as the condition of slaves, must be taken strictly.” The man was declared free : in the language of Curran, he had touched the soil that is consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation, and the law declared him “ redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled.” Now,

in the preceding judgment, it is implied that slavery, to make it legal, required stronger supports than could be adduced for it, derived from natural and political principles. If slavery is attempted to be derived from natural principles, the claim can never be supported; if from political ones, the difficulty is equally great; for I believe it will not be contended that slavery has ever proved politically advantageous to any country, if prosperity be acknowledged a test of political advantage.

The last opinion I have to notice is that of Lord Eldon, in a case that came before him many years ago. "When I find," says his Lordship, "the system of slavery instituted, fostered, and encouraged by the British laws, and under the auspices of the highest sanction, *I would hesitate a long time* before I ventured to say it was contrary to the genius of the British empire."

This great lawyer, the world knows, was in the habit of hesitating a good deal; but there are few Englishmen, I apprehend, whether lawyers or not, who would not hesitate still longer than even his Lordship did, before they would come to the conclusion that slavery was congenial to the spirit of the British Constitution.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXIX.

## POLICE-OFFICE NEGROES.

---

TO THE COUNT D'ORSAY.

Kingston, Sept. 10, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Among the numerous cases that have come before me, of a ludicrous character, either where negroes have been plaintiffs or defendants, there have been many which might have given excellent occupation to the genius of Hogarth, or the inimitable talent of the Morning Herald police-reporter; but the perception of the ridiculous is one thing, and the description of it is another,—and unfortunately the latter is not much in my way. I shall therefore content myself with giving you a few negro epistles, without taking a liberty with a single letter of the original.

But if all the cases which came before me within the last twelve months were only of a ludicrous character, if the majority were of a description to occasion merriment, the necessity for the

change in the system which has taken place, might not be considered very apparent. *I will only say that I consider that change was most imperatively called for by existent circumstances, as well as past ones;* but I do not mean to refer to any cases that came before me in my official capacity, to substantiate this assertion.

I trust the time for animosity and heart-burnings between all parties here is drawing to a close; it certainly has not come to it, but it shall not be my business to hinder or impede it. But once for all I most distinctly state, that no measure ever was more imperatively called for by urgent and obvious necessity, than that for the abolition of slavery. There is one gratifying prospect for the friends of humanity, who regard with disquietude the continuance of slavery in the islands of the other European powers, in some of which, not forgetting the French, the condition of the slave is even more abject than it has been for many years in the British colonies: the abolition of slavery in our islands must lead to its cessation in the neighbouring colonies. I do not expect it will be relinquished willingly, either by the governments of France or Spain; but the very efforts that will be required to continue it, and the imposition of new restraints on the now awakened spirit of the negro population of these islands, will render the slaves less patient of oppression,

and more united in the effort to demand justice, and, when denied, to exact it. Both of these governments had better make a virtue of necessity, and do what is expedient, with the grace of a cheerful concession. There is merit in an act even of tardy justice: there is nothing but fatuity in persistence in a system which is surrounded with difficulties that are not to be surmounted. It needs no ghost from the grave to tell us that the days of slavery are numbered in the Western World, or to point to the words that the finger of destiny has visibly written on the walls of the slave-holder's habitation—*Thy property in man shall speedily pass away!*

But I must not forget my police matters, in my politics. The following epistle was handed me by a negro lady, about sixty years of age, whose rueful expression of countenance, and violent gesticulation, made me think she had some mortal grievance to complain of: the grievance, however, was not of so serious a nature as I apprehended.

“ DR. MADDAN ESQ. Stependary Magistrate.

“ Kingston, Oct. 16, 1834.

“ Please your worship

“ To Hear my Complaint wich I am Entend to Lay Down before your worship and hoping your



worship will Have it Justified before your worship that is on Monday the 29th September 1834, one Mrs Hope live in Brown Town She began to through Casom and to abuse but wich She Didnot Call no Name ontill this last Monday She Came to my Gate and put a false Accusation on my Daughter Elizabeth Frances and Call Her a theefe and accuse her of Mug Staling that this Mrs hope Have lost and make use of Great many words in Bad Expesstion and Please your worship I have Gott witness that my Daughter never put her fut in Mrs hope yard and further more wich it Can be Prove that my Daughter Never take her mug and She have Kick up Such a Row that the permanence Guard was Oblige to came out to make Peace and to make Her Keepe Silence from maken use of bad Expression before she whould bedon and if your worship Please to Send for her to let her prove that my Daughter taken Her Mug for I think it is hard for my Daughter Character to be taken away falsly and which Mr. Curtiss was the permenence Guard that make Silence and She is a Common Disturbance threwout the neabour Hood.

“ I am

“ Your obedient Servant

“ FRANCES HOWENG.”

The next case is that of a negro suing for divorce on grounds certainly of very strong suspicion of infidelity on the part of his better half. The following epistle is the preliminary application:—

“TO MR MADDAN ESQUIRE

“Anderson Mattix beg the favour of Mr. Maddin to grant him a paper to carry to Church to join together in Matrimony as I had taken one before and ask my Master for a paper to Marry and he told me he would join us in Matrimony himself and the Overseer accordingly he did and since he join us togeth Buckra has taken away my wife from me these nine years I have tried to see if she would return to me and she will not leave Buckra after I found that be the case I went to him to give me a paper to join a fresh he said he could not I must go to the Bishop and he will give me leave to join according to his orders I went and he send me to Parson Camill of half-way Tree and he told me he would Publish the Banns, and on the third Sunday I must come to join together on the Sund I was to go my Master would not allow me to go I have brought this to you my Master to beg of you to look into this Complaint for me as I am a Religious man and wish to live as Christian life and not a sinful one my Master

can never give me a bad Character as since I was a Servant of his I always try my endeavour to obey him as a Servant never absent from my work but alway try to obey his Orders."

I had to inform the applicant in this case, that there is no jurisdiction in the colony, in matters of divorce; on which information the negro lawyer of my poor complainant immediately induced him to alter his application, and to demand a restitution of conjugal rights. But here again was a difficulty,—the question of the validity of a marriage ceremony performed by an overseer; and lastly, there was the advantage of the applicant to be considered before proceeding to extremities for the recovery of a worthless woman. He eventually agreed to leave it to the decision of the rector.

The next epistle is from a negro cook, which savours prodigiously of a lawyer's kitchen: the writer appeared before me, in a sort of demi-official culinary costume—a blue frock-coat trimmed with frogs, a white apron rolled up under his arm, and a bundle of papers in his hand, neatly folded up—either cookery receipts, or characters from his various places.

## THE COOK'S LETTER.

"TO DR. MADDEN, Special Justice of the City and parish of Kingston.

" Sir,

" Having being informed, that you are appointed to investigate, and to hear, and determine upon the Several matters and things, and all Cases arising in this said City and parish of Kingston, I am induced to lay before your Honor, my case, viz. As I was informed, by the individual whose protection I am under, at present That I am at liberty to work for the use of myself, without any molestation, from any person or persons, whomsoever, and as my profession being a Cook, and I may obtain an employment in some part in the Country, I crave much to have a paper of some kind to show that, I am at liberty to go wherever I may thinks fit, unmolested, by which means, I solicits your Kind interference, by giving me an advice, how I am to act,—By so doing, you will be ever esteemed by—

" Your most humble,

" and Obedient, Servant,

" EDWARD BROWN."

" Kingston, Aug. 14, 1834."

A female apprentice was brought before me for refusing to put herself under the treatment of a white Doctor, and preferring the assistance of

a black one—a very natural predilection, which the negroes commonly have, for doctors of their own colour. The editor of a paper described the approach of the black doctor, when called on, as a sort of hop-skip-and-a-jump movement, with his arms swinging backwards and forwards, and as styling himself a member of the Jamaica College of Physicians, duly ordained to subscribe for the sick, and to arbitrate limbs, when occasion required it; and that on my expressing some doubt of his qualifications, he made a low bow, and then, making one tremendous stride, quitted the office. There was some truth in the account mixed with a great deal of exaggeration; and in a day or two after its insertion, I saw the following letter in the newspapers from the black doctor, Mr. Wm. Barclay, which is a tolerable specimen of the altered tone to buckra, which may be remarked, since August: the negro no longer speaks “with baited breath, and in a bondsman’s key.” The black doctor felt himself aggrieved by the report in question, and he remonstrated with the buckra editor, with the spirit of a freeman, and with the propriety of a respectable person,—barring a few hard words, which go for nothing in a Jamaica newspaper:—



*"To the Editor of the Kingston Chronicle and  
City Advertiser.*

"SIR,—I have been perusing an elaborate, and, in your idea, creditable production of yours, in your paper of the 25th inst., giving an account of a trial which took place before his Honour the Special Magistrate, respecting a Mrs. Forrest and her apprentice, which is completely garbled, and void of facts. It is time you should put aside your childhood, and not tell fibs. You have distorted my expressions; and as to your invidious remarks of my being a black doctor, it tends but little to your credit. I am, Sir, black, 'tis true—my colour shews it; but pray, Sir, what colour are you of? I am not presumptive enough to style myself an M.D. I am known as a druggist, and attended the said female for a chronic affection, found her medicines, and tendered her relief—more was not required of me (without her owner's aid). I never applied to his Honour for the amount of my bill, as you stated. That and the other statements is void of facts.

"I never was sent to college: you, probably, may have walked to it, and round about it. But I value but little your sarcastic sneers: but the day is fast approaching when it will be seen the blacks will have the same advantage of emulating as you have, and possess equal capacity, and are

made of the same materials. You may designate me a blue man, for all I care ; but as long as my conduct claims respect of all my superiors, a fig for your bumbast.

“ There is at present a wide field for you to display your abilities, and not to be groveling to injure one who does not, or have any wish to offend. But, Sir, it is out of your power, or your coadjutors, to stamp me with *dishonesty*, or want of *integrity* ; and, as Pope said, an honest man was the noblest work of God, so I take my leave of you, and remain, Mr. Editor,

“ WILLIAM HAM. BARCLAY.”

“ Kingston, August 30.”

I shall merely give you an outline of two cases of recent occurrence, in which the sable parties were a couple of as accomplished knaves as I have yet met with.

The first was that of a negro boy named Adam, about twelve years of age, a remarkably sharp, intelligent-looking boy. He complained of an iron collar having been kept on his neck for about a twelvemonth by his master, for having repeatedly run away. The fact was admitted ; and I made up my mind to turn over the matter to the attorney-general, for his jurisdiction. The boy likewise preferred a claim to freedom, on the ground of

having been to England some years previously, with the children of his former owner. Mr. Hyslop, and several of the local magistrates, were on the bench. They were all struck, as I was, with the artless and ingenuous manner in which he described his voyage to England, and arrival in London. I called on him to describe the River: he said it was more than a day from the sea to London—that there were a great many ships—and where he landed, the ship was shut up in a square place filled with water; there was also the church of London not a great way from the place where he landed, and the king's palace opposite to it, with a great many big trees. The church and the palace confounded me a little; but my friends around saw nothing in the account but evident proofs of veracity. The church was no other than St. Paul's—the palace no other than Greenwich Hospital, which the poor boy had mistaken for the King's house. I asked him to describe the streets of London: he instantly gave me a most elaborate account of the big street that run through the town: this my friends immediately discovered to be the Strand;—and the little streets, that were smaller than the great one, with beautiful gardens, and great big trees growing in them—~~all these~~ it was evident, could be nothing else than the squares, and the shrubs and plants therein. His accurate description of the gaol of London,



which must have been the Old Bailey, and was built of big stones, with great iron bars in the doors and windows, that looked very dark and terrible, left no doubt of his veracity ; while the extraordinary intelligence displayed in all his answers gave us a very favourable impression of his character.

I now summoned his former owners, and all the persons whom he had spoken of as cognisant of his having been sent to England. They came ; and the result of their examination was, the clearest evidence that the boy had never been to England in his life. During their examination he never changed a muscle. He even cross-examined one of the witnesses to support his statement ; but he at length gave it up as a bad job : in fact, he had been telling a host of falsehoods, and with a plausibility so invincible, that if he did not eventually contradict his own statements, I should have almost doubted the evidence against his story. I had the iron collar taken off, and ordered him a good switching, by way of giving his imaginative powers a better direction in future.

On most plantations there is a litigious negro, who regulates the quarrels of the other negroes with one another, and takes on himself the general direction of their discontent. He is generally a shrewd, plausible fellow—has a good deal of Congo saw, or, in other negro parlance, sweet mouth—

and likewise a certain portion of what the Members of the Assembly call slack-jaw—Hibernicè, the gift of the gab. When he wheedles buckra, he does it like an adept in adulation—he daubs his vanity all over. “Massa much too good to neger; what for neger wish him free? him want no nyam; salt plenty; plenty bittel; too much every thing. Him too much happy with him sweet Massa—nebber to want free. Him born slave—why for no, him not always slave? Him no fuss of Augus neger, him for true Massa’s own neger—who care for Willyforce neger? Hi chu! who have the imperance to call him free neger?”

Buckra of course rewards with a smile, or, what is still better, with a macaroni, the fidelity of blackie, and the due appreciation of the manifest disadvantages of liberty, and, consequently, the manifold advantages of slavery; and as buckra turns his back, the last “Marning, my sweet Massa! bye to you, my good Massa!” dies away in the drawling accents of a “negro lawyer’s” fawning courtesy. But no sooner does he get among his own people, than the tune is altered; the obsequious slave becomes the consequential man, impatient of all temporary restrictions on his liberty, and morbidly alive to every wrong, real or imaginary, that seizes on his attention.

A man of this kind may do a great deal of mischief on a property where the negroes are discon-



tented ; but, fortunately, his influence is only among the discontented ; and no body of people, either black or white, can be rendered thoroughly dissatisfied with their condition, whatever individuals may be, without a cause. Generally speaking, the negroes are easily contented. No people, that I ever met, are more susceptible of kindly feelings,—more sensible of good treatment,—and more disposed to be grateful for it.

One of these negro lawyers, whose chief business it is to plague the bushas as much as possible, was sent before me for putting the negroes in a state of insubordination, on a property where the special magistrate, Mr. Lloyd, had been only recently explaining the new law to the apprentices. On that occasion, the negro constable complained of one Mathews, who put a variety of quibbling questions to the magistrate, as to the nature of the crimes which were punishable under the new law. Mr. Lloyd gave him every information ; but the man was not satisfied with being told, that disobedience of all legal commands, refusal to labour, insubordination, and disorderly conduct, were punishable. He wanted to know what legal construction was to be put on every word in Mr. Lloyd's replies—what were the boundaries and limits of insubordination.

One of the plantation negro constables interfered, and told him it was unnecessary to ask

such questions ; whereupon (the magistrate having gone away) Mathews said to the negroes, the magistrate was not a just one, that he had not told the truth, and the negro constables had taken a false oath, and that, in consequence of their perjuries, their bellies would swell, and they would die. It was given in evidence, that he excited the negroes to a state of discontent only short of actual outrage ; since which time they were in a state of insubordination, and the constables were looked upon as under the ban of obeah : such was the evidence of the negroes themselves, as well as the overseer.

Mathews, being called on, advanced with the air of a man who had much to say in his defence, and was primed and charged for the occasion even to the muzzle. It was frequently with difficulty I could keep him from exploding into a speech during the examination of the witnesses. But now, when he caught the signal to pull the trigger of his eloquence, off it went, and I send you *the report*, in order that you may judge of this discharge of negro oratory :

“ Well, massa, since the day me born, me always live like a good neger, and a perfect Christian on Salisbury Plain. Me fader and moder— (he was begged not to go back to the days of his youth) well, massa, leave fader and moder one side—when me was first Christened

by parson Camill—(intimation that the charge against him had nothing to do with his baptism) well, massa, no matter about the Christen, soon as me grow up and able to talk a leetel, me always yeerie good advice,—(requested to pass over his childhood) well, massa, say no more of piccanini times—new parson open schools: ebery Sunday go to school; soon know plenty—(reminded to leave his school-days for the present times) well, my good massa, say not one word more about school, what signify for true how much poor neger larn? what for neger learn to read book?—to beat gombah all day Sunday? no! to play bonjaw all day Sunday? no! to tell oder negro nancy stories all day long? no! to go after John Canoes in big holidays, or spend piccanini Christmas (Easter) dancing and all oder vanities? no, massa! me go to school to larn uprighteous conduct, and to be a perfect Christian. Me neber do nothing bad; work for massa like a good neger; never teef massa's goods; never tell oder neger bad; never make miscief 'gainst busha. Magistrate come to me and yeerie de complaints; him tell we all de law, den me axe what crime for law punish neger so da we regulate our conduct. Him den reckon all crime up. Fus him tell us 'insubordination'; den me say what for dat mean? him say impurance to massa; den me axe what dat mean? him say, if massa tell me for to do something, and



we don't yeerie very well, dat mean imperance. Den me axe if imperance mean saucy, and him say yes. But black neger constable say, what for axe all dese things?—ebery body know what dese things mean. But me axe once more, 'pose me want to pray to Gar Amighty, and busha says there is something else to do, does dat mean imperance? Constable cry again, ebery body knows about dat; den me tell him, ebery constable stops neger's mouth—a false constable, and has taken oath falsely, and ebery body swears false, him belly swell, and him die, but nebber said constable die so. Neber said magistrate was a false, an unjust magistrate: him know himself too well, and ebery body know him to be perfect Christian."

Mr. Mathews having concluded a very long speech, the delivery of which was a great deal better than the matter, folded his arms and retired a couple of steps. It was intimated to him that had he attended more to the instruction of his parson, he would not boast of being that which no one is in the eyes of religion—a perfect man; and that it is not those who call themselves perfect, who are always found devoid of imperfections; that one of his most obvious ones was a quibbling spirit, which he displayed in his interrogatories but for the purpose of producing a misunderstanding of the meaning of the magistrate's observations, and

not in the fair spirit of inquiry for the sake of information, for the future guidance of himself and others. He was also reminded that the law had been before explained to them, and he could not be ignorant that the apprentices could not be now prevented, at all proper and seasonable times, from performing their religious duties, as any such interference with them would be illegal.

This man wanted to do mischief, and I thought deserved punishment. But even in this instance, where, by misrepresenting the exposition of the law to the negroes, a spirit of partial discontent was created, the very negroes themselves gave evidence against him, and, after his punishment, acknowledged that he justly deserved it. Now in every estate whereupon there are three or four hundred negroes, in all probability there must be some characters of this sort: those inimical to the negroes say they all are of this kind: I believe, on properties which are commonly well managed, they would find it difficult to pick out more than one or two of this description.

It is a difficult thing to get a negro to understand any thing which he does not wish to hear: the more you try to explain a matter that is disagreeable to him, the more incapable he appears of comprehension; or if he finds this plan ineffectual, he endeavours to render the matter ridiculous; and his talent at rendering ridicule sar-



castic is really surprising. An overseer was lately reading one of the Governor's admirable addresses to the negroes, in which the obligation of industry was enforced by the observation that every one was obliged to work for his bread, some with their hands, and others with their heads. When the overseer was done, one of the negro-drivers said to his comrades, "Heerie him well, and be sure to work; good Gubernor says ebery body work, some with their hands—dese are de trong men what dig de cane-holes—some with their heads—dese are de piccanini moders, who carry de pots and pitchers on their heads every day to de field—ebery good neger woman work hard with him head—ya heerie de Gubernor."

I suppose by this time you wish me and all the negroes in the centre of Africa, where there is no post-office.

I am, my dear Count,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXX.

## "SACRED RIGHTS."

---

TO J. BUCKINGHAM, Esq., M. P.

Kingston, Sept. 15, 1834.

Dear Sir,

A negro was recently brought before me belonging to a Mr. Anderson, of this town, to be sworn in as a constable on his master's property. I discovered, by the mere accident of seeing the man sign his name in very well written Arabic, while I was swearing in his comrades, that he was a man of education, and, on subsequent inquiry, a person of exalted rank in his own country, who had been kidnapped in a province bordering on Timbuctoo. He had been sold into slavery in Jamaica nearly thirty years ago, and had preserved the knowledge of the learning of his country, and obtained the character of one a little more enlightened than the majority of his savage brethren, and that was all. The interest I took in all Oriental matters (if no other motive

influenced me) induced me to enter minutely into this man's history. I had him to my house: he gave me a written statement of the leading events of his life. I found the geographical part of his story correct: he became a frequent visitor of mine in his master's leisure-time; and I soon discovered that his attainments, as an Arabic scholar, were the least of his merits. I found him a person of excellent conduct, of great discernment and discretion. I think if I wanted advice, on any important matter in which it required extreme prudence, and a high sense of moral rectitude to qualify the possessor to give counsel, I would as soon have recourse to the advice of this poor negro as any person I know. Now, without going into any discussions of an anti-slavery description, by what name under heaven that is compatible with moderation, that is musical to ears polite, must that system be called by, which sanctioned the stealing away of a person like this, as much a nobleman in his own country as any titled chief is in ours; and in his way, without any disparagement to the English noble, as suitably educated, for his rank? Fancy, Sir, one of the scions of our nobility, a son of one of our war-chiefs—Lord Londonderry's, for example, educated at Oxford, and, in the course of his subsequent travels, unfortunately falling into the hands of African robbers, and being carried into bondage. Fancy the poor youth

marched in the common slave coffle to the first market-place on the coast. He is exposed for sale : nobody inquires whether he is a patrician or a plebeian : nobody cares whether he is ignorant or enlightened : it is enough that he has thews and sinews for a life of labour without reward. Will you follow him to the slave-ship that is to convey him to a distant land ? A vessel, perhaps, similar to that visited by Dr. Walsh on his passage to Brazil, "where 562 human beings were huddled together, so closely stowed that there was no possibility of lying down or changing their position night or day."—Well, like Sterne, let us take the single captive : he survives the passage, and has seen the fifth part of his comrades perish in the voyage : he is landed on some distant island, where he is doomed to hopeless slavery. The brutal scramble for the slaves has ceased : he is dragged away by his new master, but not before he is branded with a heated iron, which may only sear his flesh, while the iron brand of slavery, the burning thought of endless bondage, "enters into his soul."

If he wince under the brand, some ulema of Africa, who has studied the annals of Christian slavery, may console him with the reflection, that it was lawful of old to mark the thing we have bought or sold,—“and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall sell him for



ever." But, perhaps, the ulema may forget to inform him that his master cannot do so before the servant shall plainly say, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free." I have heard of slaves who would not "go out free." I have listened to many stories of negroes, who so loved their masters, that they scoffed at liberty: but I have no faith in unnatural affection: I never saw the slave who would not "go out free," if he had the power of so doing, and who would not sacrifice his love even for his master, for the enjoyment of the thing in life which men most love—their liberty.

Do not imagine that the negroes in any condition of servitude in these countries are a happy and contented people: believe me, there is not a man stolen from his country, and carried into slavery, who does not feel more misery, and undergo more suffering, than I have the power or the inclination to describe. The Rev. Mr. Brydges, however, assures us, that "slavery has been established by prescription, and immemorial usage has confirmed it as one of the most important, if not the most obvious, bonds of civil society!!!" Will the amiable historian have the kindness to inform us, what is there in those bonds of civil society which are obviously advantageous to the community of any slave-country, or beneficial to the victims of this immemorial usage? "There is



no passage in the Christian Scriptures," we are told by Paley, "by which slavery is condemned or prohibited." But what passage, pray, in the Christian Scriptures tolerates it? Is it the one that tells us "To do unto others, as we would that others should do unto us?" St. Paul, as Mr. Brydges observes, preached to slaves obedience\* to their masters; but St. Paul did not

\* The words of the text are, "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh," &c. The word slave, I believe, is not to be found in the Scriptures; but I concede to Mr. Brydges, that the term bond-servant, to all intents and purposes, means a slave in our acceptation of the word. A great deal of learning, I believe, has been misapplied by anti-slavery writers in refuting the opinion that the state of bond-service was similar in its nature to that of slavery. I think they are in error. But what need is there of having recourse to any such refutation? Bond-service, or slavery, unquestionably was sanctioned by the Mosaic law. The Jews were permitted to keep bond-servants of the heathen nations, and of the children of the stranger that sojourned amongst them; but the state of society that rendered slavery necessary in the infancy of that country, and to a people peculiarly circumstanced with regard to the hostile nations which surrounded them, are no longer in operation. But though slavery have the authentic sanction of the Mosaic law, as I believe it has, is it incumbent on Christians to avail themselves of it? And though the Jews had an authentic written commandment from God, for reasons inscrutable to us, to "save alive nothing that breatheth," in the cities of their enemies, and to extirpate the heathen nations opposed to them, surely the law

preach oppression to the masters of them ; neither did the King's minister, on any recent occasion, sanction its employment, though that minister might have been interrogated in the words of that Apostle—" Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant ? to his own master he standeth or falleth." And were it not irreverent to quote from such a source, on a subject like the present, from the same divine authority, I would ask those who vilify humanity, by lowering the character and capacity of the negro to the level of the brute, " Why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? "

But the learned Bishop of Llandaff leaves all the advocates for slavery at an immeasurable distance in theological ratiocination on this subject, for he at once derives the institution of slavery from the justice of God himself. " God," says the Bishop, " cannot authorise injustice, but he did authorise slavery among the Jews ; therefore slavery is not opposed to justice, nor am I certain that slavery is any where forbidden to Christians." How can we be thankful enough for the industry of our hierarchy, in gleaning those negative authorities from the Scriptures, for a system which

divine or human, under which we live, would not hold the nation guiltless of murder and robbery, which waged war on the principle of battle to the knife, and pillage to the last mite in the habitation of the widow and her orphans.

some foolish people are weak enough to think is unfavourable to religion, and inimical to humanity?

But though there is no certainty that slavery is any where forbidden to Christians, what opinion, I would ask, would that prelate entertain of an individual who advocated the crime of Burking, as a practice beneficial to dissection, that came not under the ban of the general injunction, "to do no murder?" And though that prelate has no certainty that the stealing of human beings is any where prescribed in the Decalogue, I would ask, with reverence, to what kind of property the eighth commandment does not apply? But you will say, I am expending my zeal to little purpose in refuting arguments, for the purpose of repudiating a system that exists no longer; but I am sorry to tell you that it does exist—nay, more, that it flourishes. Slavery is, indeed, scotched in our colonies, but is not killed. Its name is changed: its character remains to be changed hereafter. In the islands of the French and the Spanish, in the Brazils, and in America, the system is as prosperous as ever: in the latter, where the abolition of their slave-trade was simultaneously carried with our act, the southern states are still surreptitiously supplied with slaves, (I mean young robust slaves, not the refuse of the plantations, which their colonisation society send to Africa,)



by Spanish smugglers from Cuba. Dr. Walsh, in 1831, asserts, that "this horrid traffic in human flesh is nearly as extensively carried on as ever, and under circumstances, perhaps, of a more revolting character." In 1834 he might have used the same language. But even at the present time I have been not a little surprised to find persons, even of a religious character, advocating slavery less as a system beneficial to the community than pleasing to the Divine authority; from which they wrest a sanction to a system which was tolerated from a necessity no longer in existence, but not enjoined, and any thing but recommended. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him." \*

\* Well might this passage be quoted, in commenting on that circular, lately addressed by a colonial minister to the Governors of the West Indies. "The intrusion," says that document, "into a British colony, of foreign fugitive slaves, should be made punishable as a misdemeanour, by imprisonment, with hard labour." And further, he is to be considered as an alien, and forcibly sent off the island. Was the case of Lecesne and Lescoffery so soon forgotten, that the extraordinary powers exercised over men of colour, *as aliens*, by Mr. Hector Mitchell, was to be re-enforced, for the purpose of arming men, already vested with a little brief authority, which they certainly make the most of, with still more power over the coloured community?

"If thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee." "But the stranger, (that is, the slave,) that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." The author of the "Annals of Jamaica," unlucky for his argument, cites the sale of Joseph to the merchant who dealt "in spicery, balm, and myrrh," as a proof of the legality of slavery. Now, it is to be remembered, that Joseph was only doomed to bondage, when the question was asked by one of his brethren, "What profit is it that we slay our brother?" and the legality of the sale certainly does not appear to have been very satisfactory to Joseph, for we read of his speaking to the chief butler in prison of his slavery, as a robbery of his rights—"For, indeed, I was *stolen* away out of the land of the Hebrews." Now this is the first slave sale on record, and it is spoken of as a robbery. The first slave "set over the land of Egypt was a Jew; a Mameluke was the last." The ancient slave-dealers are so variously described, that it is difficult to know how to class them. The Midianite who bought Joseph was a dealer "in spicery, balm, and myrrh." Josephus says, Solomon brought from Ophir "much ivory, blacks, and monkies." But the imports of Solo-



mon are differently described in the book of Chronicles: "Every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks."

But if the Jews practised slavery, where is the precept in the Christian Scripture that recommends that system? and if they, to whom slavery was permitted, abused that license, retributive justice may have written its moral in the doom of that people which was seven times reduced to slavery, and, finally, sold in the public market at the fall of Jerusalem.

Now, though it may be a great consolation to my poor friend, the Timbuctoo negro, who has been pining in bondage for the last thirty years, to be told that slavery was coeval with Noah, I doubt if the poor fellow would like to travel with any annalist of slavery to a period posterior to the Deluge, in quest of an antediluvian authority for the interesting fact, that the "system flowed naturally from the sources of humanity and reason, that none should kill one another in cold blood." The poor Timbuctoo man would, probably, say—"Reverend Sir, when we fight in Africa, reason has nothing to do with our warfare, and humanity has just as little to say to the seizure of our enemies; for if we spare our prisoners, it is because we mean to sell them to your people; and if we go to war with our neighbours, it is because

you Christians on our coast are always ready to buy them up: but I beg to assure you, there would be no wars amongst us if there were no white men to buy the captives, for the sake of which advantage our marauding excursions are undertaken. It is to supply your dealers we lie in ambush for the helpless women of one another's tribes. It is for you, Christian buckras, we deprive mothers of their children, and the daughters of our people of their natural protectors. It is for gentlemen like you, that the ties of nature are torn to pieces in the heart of Africa. It is for your service that we lay violent hands on the poor females of our country; and it is for your system, that 'flows naturally from the sources of humanity and reason,' that we desolate the land which gave us birth!"

We suppose if the white gentleman deigned to notice the observation of "the African savage"—"Simpleton!" he would say, "what right have you to complain of a system which, as I have already told you, has the sanction of the earliest authority? If you work for us, do we not feed and clothe you—lavish the tenderest care on you—and if you misbehave, do we not correct you for your good?" "You do, Massa, indeed!" I hear the black man reply—"Massa take too much trouble on him hands a great deal."—"Silence, ungrateful negro!" would the white gentleman continue, "if we

do correct you, are we not privileged to do so? If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be punished; notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, *for he is his money.*"—But whose effigy, Sir, is on that money? might ask the negro.—Is it not the king's?—In whose likeness is he made?—In whose likeness are all men made?—In God's own likeness made he them: then, Sir, (if an idea of Milton's might be clothed in the language of a negro,) give unto the Creator of all men the honour that belongs to him, and give to that humanity in which his image is reflected the rights that belong to it.

Insolent assumption! would reply the theologian; all men indeed possessed of such ennobling attributes! Is it among the miserable wretches of your country, whom La Bruyere has described as hardly human, that we are to look for beings who deserve the name of men? "We find," says this philosopher, "under the torrid zone certain wild animals, both male and female, scattered through the country, black and sun-scorched, and bent to the earth which they dig up with invincible perseverance. They have something like an articulate voice; and when they stand on their feet, they exhibit a human face, and, in fact, these creatures are men;" but miserably degraded and irreme-



diably debased, adds the commentator; and, therefore, he continues, "we deal in your species because it is profitable for us and advantageous to you; and no one can deny that our property in you is sacred. Was not Hagar a bond-servant? Was not Canaan decreed to be 'a servant of servants unto his brethren?'"

"Ay, Sir," replies the African scholar, "but was it not after Noah 'awoke from his wine,' that he pronounced the curse of slavery, the first that ever issued from man's lips."

Heedless of the interruption, the white gentleman proceeds, "Was not Joseph regularly bought and sold? did he not become the property of the Midianite merchant, '*for he was his money?*'"

"How much money, Sir," asks the negro, "might the man be?"

"Twenty pieces of silver in this instance," replies the divine; "but the price fixed by the Mosaic law was thirty shekels, or about three pounds fifteen shillings of our money!"

"Then, Sir," answers the African savage, "as the same law which sanctions slavery has specified the price of the slave, here are the three pounds fifteen shillings, the thirty shekels which you say was the legal price of liberty—take it to my master, I will no longer be a slave. In the book you gave me, we are told by St. Paul to

prefer liberty to slavery: 'Ye are bought with a price: be not therefore the servants of men.'

A smile of pity, with a slight expression of contempt, might ripple over the broad Atlantic of the countenance of the divine: "Do you not know, Sir," he would say, "that the value of slaves has augmented largely since the times I speak of?"

"I do, Sir!" replies the negro; "but till you show me in your book where the price of the slave is enhanced, since the time it was fixed at the thirty shekels, I must either insist on procuring my liberty for that sum, or deny your right to rest your system on the authority of that law which gives no sanction to those who are living under it to deviate from its prescribed usages, by increasing the temptation to steal men, and augmenting the difficulty ten times over of redeeming them."

But the white gentleman would deny that the slave had the power of demanding his ransom: he would tell him that the Hebrew might sell his own daughter into slavery, provided it was not in a foreign land. "But does the civil law of your country," would ask the negro, "recognise his present right to dispose thus of his own flesh and blood?" I will spare the blushes of the gentleman he interrogates, and will take upon myself to answer from my own experience. The law, even as it now stands, *does permit the father to hold his own*



*son in bondage, and the son to demand the wages of slavery from his own mother, and to claim the services of his own sister as his bond-woman.* These horrors are not merely possible contingencies that may be heard of occasionally; they are actual occurrences, two of which came before me within the last three months. A Jew of this town, a man of litigious character, had a young Mulatto man taken up for refusing to pay wages: it turned out that these wages were demanded from his own son, his child by one of his negro slaves. I referred the disgusting claim to the higher authorities, for I confess I was unwilling to believe that the rights of slavery were compatible with those of paternity, or could be maintained over the same individual. I was informed, however, that the apprentice claiming exemptions from servitude on the ground of his being the illegitimate son of his master, could not be absolved from his apprenticeship on any such allegation. The law was on the side of this modern Shylock, and, in spite of all attempts to move or to shame him into a renunciation of his claim, he would have justice and his bond—and I was “a second Daniel” in his estimation when I most reluctantly fixed for that obdurate father the wages of a son’s slavery, but in amount the lowest sum I had ever ordered.

A free black came before me to claim the ser-

vices of a runaway slave and her four children, who had been absent from him many months. I had them taken up. The woman proved to be the claimant's own sister. He denied not the relationship; but, on the contrary, in support of his claim, said, that her mother and his had been his slave also, and had died in servitude to him. I could hardly believe my own ears. Captain Dillon, who sat with me, was equally astonished. I made the man repeat the words over again, and took them down. His mother and sister had been bequeathed to him. They were his property, and up to the time of his mother's death she belonged to his household. There was, unfortunately, no doubt as to the legality of his claim. I examined the public registry, but the slaves were duly registered. I looked at the conveyance: there was no informality or defect in the title. I told the woman she would have to prepare to go back to her brother—that he was her legal master, and she and her children, with the exception of the youngest, who was under six years of age, must return to his service; but that I would take two days before I gave a final decision, in order that all the coloured population of Kingston might be afforded the most public opportunity that could be given them, of witnessing an event of so much importance to her brother as the recovery of the services of the daughter of his own mother. The

claimant said, he would be sorry to put me to so much trouble; he would be content to receive back his apprentices without any public ceremony. I assured him, however, the public ceremony he should have, and that no pains should be spared to give the decision in his favour all the solemnity which the utmost publicity could give it. There was a general buzz amongst the assemblage, both of blacks and whites, which was tolerably indicative of the feelings that were entertained of him. He now said something about giving the woman her liberty, or of selling it to her at a very low rate, but the children he would have, and no price would induce him to relinquish his claim to them. The poor mother looked the picture of despair. I again told him he should have them all before the face of his countrymen, and that it should be out of the power of any human being in Jamaica ever to dispute his claim to them, or to call in question the title by which he had held his own mother in slavery to the hour of her death. He said, in a very low tone, he would give his sister her freedom. I was too much afraid of his resolution to affect to hear him, but I drew out the manumission paper, and subsequently told him he might sign it or not, as he thought proper. He had it read over to him; and when it came to the signing part, he positively refused to subscribe his name to it. I was in the act of tearing up



the document, when the audible groans of his own people induced him again to take the paper: I allowed myself to be persuaded to let him have it—the paper was in his hand—humanity did not guide it, but shame did—he signed the paper; and never was there a manumission performed with so bad a grace. “Now,” said he, “tell her to give me up these two children she has taken away from me,” pointing to two chubby little Mulattos about seven and eight years of age (the eldest he had managed to get into his possession; the youngest, being under six, I gave up to the mother). I wish you could have seen that poor mother standing before the bar with her baby in one arm, and with the other encircling the two little boys, with that unutterable terror in her wild look, which I believe nothing but the wildness of a mother’s fears can ever equal. I had the children placed before the bench to prevent any sudden disappearance of them or the complainant; and now before giving them up, I felt it necessary to applaud the generosity of this man, to extol his humanity, and to put his heart on the best of terms with itself; and it was not my fault if he was not overpowered with the sense of his own goodness. What I had asked from him before, I asked for his own sake; I now requested him, for mine, to give up one of the children; I was afraid to ask too much: well, he did give up one, and,

before he left the office, he gave up the other. It was an arduous business, indeed,—at one time almost a hopeless one, but I was well seconded by Captain Dillon, and one of the reporters of a paper not very partial to me or any of my colleagues,—a well-disposed creature of the name of Michell. I wish, Sir, you had witnessed this scene ; that you had observed that callous negro, drawling out his claim, with all the apathy of a slave-owner, and all the brazen insensibility of an upstart freeman,—while the wretched woman, his sister, whose manumission has been just extorted from him, is trembling for her children, standing by his side with averted looks of fear and of abhorrence, clasping her little children, and gathering them about her, while he is in the act of demanding “ his sacred rights ” in the flesh of his own sister and of her children. You may imagine, better than I can describe, her fearful interest in the scene that is going on,—the bewildered expression of her regard when she sees her children, as she believes, about to be given up to their legal owner, or when she hears the threat of the only person she looked to for protection, of destroying the manumission already obtained with so much difficulty ; and all this time the tranquil deportment of the claimant, the ineffable imperturbableness of the slave-holder’s feelings, while he is dinging into my ear, in reply to every appeal



I can make to his humanity, or intimation to his fears—"I want nothing but my rights!!!" But in his idea nature was possessed of none; and in seeking to deprive that poor woman of her children, he might be only legally claiming his pound of flesh, but he was prepared to cut it from the side that was next the mother's heart.

In this letter I fear I have presented human nature to you in one of the most abject of its forms: it will be my pleasing task to offer it to you in my next in one of its noblest aspects; and believe me when I speak in terms of commendation of any thing that attracts my notice, it affords me infinitely more gratification than to have to speak disparagingly of any sight or scene that passes before me. And when I do, I would fain have it remembered that slavery, "call it by what name you will," is the misfortune of Jamaica, the crime of the mother-country.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXXI.

## THE SCHERIFE OF TIMBUCTOO.

---

To J. BUCKINGHAM, Esq.

Kingston, September 29, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Having made up my mind in the case of the negro Edward Donlan, to purchase the unexpired period of his apprenticeship, (which is the jargon now in use, to express the act of redeeming a man from slavery,) I made an application to his master, to request he would nominate a local magistrate, to act with the special justice of some adjoining parish, for the purpose of proceeding to a valuation of his apprentice. Whatever that valuation might be, I hoped to indemnify myself by a public subscription for so large an outlay.

I was given to understand, by Mr. Anderson, that the man was invaluable to him—that he kept his books (in Arabic characters)—and that the accounts of the whole of his vast business were kept by him—in short, that no sum of money which

could be awarded to him could compensate him for the loss of the man's services. I also heard, indirectly, that the attempt to procure his liberty had been already made, unsuccessfully, some years ago, by the Duke de Montebello, when he visited Jamaica, on his return from his South American travels, and had even ineffectually applied at the Colonial Office, to be assisted in devising means for procuring his freedom. But, though a duke had failed, I had the modesty to think it was no reason why I should. I was certainly disheartened, but not dissuaded from renewing the attempt.

Some weeks passed over before any further step was taken. I now waited on Mr. Anderson, and I frankly stated to him what my wishes and intentions were. Mr. Anderson was a perfect stranger to me ; and what I had to propose, in case he objected to a public valuation, was to enter into a private agreement for his release.

I know not with what earnestness I may have pressed the matter ; but this I know, that I found myself talking to a man whose disposition, if Nature ever writes a legible hand on human features, was as benevolent as any I ever met with.

No adventitious advantages of mien or manner may enhance the merit of a noble action ; but these advantages do enhance the pleasure which the contemplation of such merit always affords us.

This gentleman, I should think, is upwards of sixty ; his hair is white as snow : but a hale, fresh-coloured, happy-looking, kind-hearted person, whose patriarchal mien, and genuine old-English-gentlemanism (if I may coin with impunity) of air and manner, give even a stranger a favourable impression of one to whom Nature has been so kind, and Time itself more indulgent than usual.

There are some men whom, perhaps, you see for the first time in your life, and why or wherefore you know not, but you feel your spirit in communion with theirs from the first moment of your intercourse. Anderson was one of these men. A great many words did not pass between us : I expressed the wish I felt to obtain the man's release : he said, I need say no more on the subject. The man was valuable to him ; his services were worth more to him than those of negroes for whom he had paid £300 ; but the man had been a good servant to him—a faithful and a good negro—and he would take no money for him—he would give him his liberty !!! I pressed him to name any reasonable sum for his release, but he positively refused to receive one farthing in the way of indemnity for the loss of the man's services.

The following day was appointed to execute the act of manumission, at the public office of the special magistrate. It is needless to make any

observation on conduct like this : a generous action, that is serviceable to a man's prospects or pecuniary affairs, every one can appreciate ; but a noble action, that does honour to human nature, while it confers on one, in whose person the rights of human nature have long been outraged, the greatest of all earthly privileges, no language can do justice to the merits of ; and few, who feel all the admiration for it it deserves, are fit to make it the subject of description.

The time appointed for carrying the release into effect having become known, a great number of the respectable inhabitants of Kingston attended : the office was indeed crowded at an early hour with persons of all complexions, who had come to witness the ceremony. Mr. Anderson and his negro, Edward Donlan, being in attendance, the manumission papers were prepared ; but before they were signed, the nature of the circumstances which had led to the effort that had been made to obtain the man's freedom, and the manner in which that boon had been granted by his master, were dwelt on at some length ; and the merits of the fidelity of the one, and the generosity of the other, were feebly perhaps described, however forcibly they might be felt. Indeed, the merits of the latter could not be overrated. It might be very easy for a stranger to recommend Mr. Anderson to be generous on such an occasion, but it is easy



to be generous when nothing is to be given, and very agreeable to be philanthropic when the exercise of our humanity is indulged at no expense. But with Mr. Anderson it was very different, for no sums of money that a bench of magistrates could honestly award, could adequately compensate him for the loss of this man's services. But, nevertheless, he performed this most generous act of manumission as it became a good man to perform a gracious action—freely and without hesitation or condition. Though I do say it, who perhaps should not say it, the scene was one of no ordinary interest. Beside the bench stood a negro of exalted rank in his own country, in the act of obtaining his liberty, after many a long year of slavery, and near him his venerable master, “prepared to give unto his servant that which was just and equal, knowing that he also had a Master in heaven.” There were tears of joy on some of the black features before me, and there were smiles of satisfaction even on white faces in that assemblage. It is said the gods are pleased to behold the successful exertions of a good man struggling with adversity; but if we are justified in estimating what is pleasing to that intelligence by the extent of the advantages conferred on man by human beneficence, perhaps the sight of a good master, voluntarily making a faithful bondsman free, and laying down authority which it may not

be in his nature to abuse, but yet which he knows it is not safe for mortal man to be entrusted with, is one of the exhibitions of humanity in which its affinity with a higher nature appears at a distance less remote than in almost any other situation in which we can conceive it. And on such an occasion one might address the chief actor in that scene in the words of sacred commendation, in speaking of the redemption of the slave,—“ It shall not seem hard unto thee when thou sendest him away from thee, for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.”

I did not allow the public to be unmindful of the concluding part of the injunction, “ When thou sendest him out free, thou shalt not let him go away empty ;” for the following notice was presented to the public attention, and in a few days I had the satisfaction of putting twenty pounds in the hands of the liberated negro of Timbuctoo.

“ Kingston, Sept. 9, 1834.

“ To the humane attention of the inhabitants of Kingston, the case is earnestly recommended of Abon Becr Sadiki, lately the apprentice of Mr. Anderson ; a man of noble rank in his own country, who for many years has been in servitude in

this island, and has demeaned himself in such a manner as to have obtained a reputation for good conduct, and even for attainments as a scholar, which few of his countrymen have ever gained, or at least preserved in slavery. The benevolent assistance of this community is now solicited to enable him to turn to his own advantage the unexpired period of his apprenticeship. The history of his life, which accompanies this paper, is written in his own language, and couched in terms at once creditable to his acquirements as a scholar, and his character as a man of discretion and integrity. How he could have attained so competent a knowledge of his native language at so early an age as that at which he had been taken from his country, and have kept up his knowledge of it in the unfavourable circumstances in which he was placed in a foreign land, it is difficult to conceive ; and it is only for the considerate to appreciate the extent of so much perseverance, and the encouragement that should be the reward of so much patient merit."

*" The History of Abon Becr Sadiki, known in Jamaica by the name of Edward Donlan.*

" My name is Abon Becr Sadiki, born in Timbuctoo, and brought up in Geneh. I acquired the knowledge of the Alcoran in the country of



Gounah, in which country there are many teachers for young people : they are not of one country, but come from different parts, and are brought there to dwell for their instruction. The names of the different masters in the country called Gounah are Aboudoulaki, a son of Ali Aga ; Mohamet Wadiwahoo ; Mohamet Ali Mustaphi ; Ibrahim, son of Yussuf, a native ; and Ibrahim, son of Abou Hassan, from Footatoroo. The whole of these masters are in our school, and under the direction of a head-master, the son of Ali Aga Mahomed Tuffosere. My father's name is Kara-Mousa, *Scheriff* (the interpretation of which is, ' of a noble family ' ). The names of my father's brothers are Aderiza, Abdriman, Mahomet, and Abon Becr. Their father, my grandfather, lived in the country of Timbuctoo and Geneh : some say he was the son of Ibrahim, the founder of my race in the country of Geneh.

“ And it came to pass, after the death of my grandfather, jealousy arose among the sons and the rest of the family, which scattered them into the different parts of Soudan. Aderiza went to the country of Marsina, where he dwelt a little time : after that he went over the river and dwelt in Geneh : he married a daughter of Maroulhaide Abon Becr, for his wife. Abdriman went to the country of Cong, and married the daughter of Samer Ali, the lord of that country, where dwelt

his wife. Mahomet went to the country of Gounah, and married the daughter of the king of Gounah. Abon Beer remained in the country of Timbuctoo along with the rest of the family who were not yet married. My father was always travelling to the country of Cassina and Bournoo, where he married and returned with my mother to Timbuctoo. After two years elapsed, my father then thought upon his brothers, whom he repented having parted with, which grieved him exceedingly, and he desired his servants to prepare themselves to go along with him to see how and where they were. The servants obeyed, and accordingly went with him to Geneh, from there to Cong, and from there to Gounah, where they stopped; and the servants there gathered a quantity of gold for their master; for there is a great deal of gold in that country, from the wilderness down to the river-side, also from the rocks. They are obliged to break the stones to dust, and put them into a vessel of water, when all the gold will sink down separate, the dust will float, and the gold will remain in the vessel; and then they purify the same, and make it ready for use. The money they make use of is a shell called Jagago: they are in the habit of bartering goods for goods according to prices. In this said country (Gounah) my father gathered a large quantity of gold and silver, some of which he



sent to his father-in-law : he also sent horses, mules, and rich silks, from Egypt, as presents for Ali Aga Mahomad Tassere, my grandfather, in the country of Bournoo and Cassina. My father afterwards took the bad fever, which was the cause of his death in Gounah, where he was buried. At this time I was a child, and knew nothing then ; but some of my old relations told me all about the life of my departed father. My uncles, after the death of my father, returned to their different countries, and only left my uncle, named Mahomet, at Gounah, where he dwelt.

“ And it came to happen, about five years after the death of my father, I got the consent of my teacher to go to the country of Gounah, to see the grave of my father. Whereupon he said to me, that with the blessing of God he would accompany me. He then prepared proper provision for our journey, and took along with us many of his eldest scholars to bear us company. We departed, and, after long fatigue, we arrived at Cong ; from there we went to Gounah, and stopped there for about two years, as we considered the place a home, having much property therein. After the lapse of two years my master took it into his mind to travel to Agi. In the mean time he made inquiries of different people who had travelled in that country ; and some of them told him that Mohamed Cassina and Adama Anina,

his brothers, were then going to that country. He then asked his informant where those people were to be found: they told him that they were already gone, except Adama, who was now preparing to go. My master then set out, and left us with my uncle Mohamad in Gounah, until he returned. In the mean time we heard that Abdengara, king of Buntuco, having slain Iffoa, the king of Bandara, in battle, also wanted to kill Cudjoe, the captain of an adjoining district. Abdengara sent to inform Cudjoe that if he would pay him such a quantity of gold as he required for a ransom, he would be content. Cudjoe then sent much gold to him, which he refused. He said to the messenger, "Return to thy master, and tell him, that if he do not send two hundred pieces of gold, I will not be satisfied, and my sword shall take off his head." When this messenger returned to his lord, and related the message he received, Cudjoe took away the ransom and kept it, and sent a message to the king of Gounah relating the transaction. When Abdengara came to hear of Cudjoe sending to inform the king of Gounah of his doings, he became wrath, and ordered all his army to battle against Cudjoe. And when the king of Gounah heard that Abdengara had come in with his army to fight him, he then called all his men to meet the enemy in the country of Bolo, where they commenced fighting from the

middle of the day until night. After that they went to their different camps : seven days after that they gathered up again, and commenced the war in the town Anacco, where they fought exceedingly, and there were many lives lost on both sides ; but Abdengara's army, being stronger than the king of Gounah's, took possession of the town. Some of Gounah's people were obliged to fly to Cong, and on that very day they made me a captive. As soon as I was made prisoner, they stripped me, and tied me with cord, and gave me a heavy load to carry, and led me into the country of Buntocoo,—from thence to the town of Cumasy, where the king of Shantee reigned, whose name is Ashai,—and from thence to Assicuma,—and from thence to Agimaca, which is the country of the Fantees ; from thence to the town of Dago, by the sea-side (all the way on foot, and well loaded) ; there they sold me to the Christians in that town—there one of the ship's captains purchased me, and delivered me over to one of his sailors : the boat immediately pushed off, and I was carried on board of the ship. We were three months at sea before we arrived in Jamaica, which was the beginning of bondage.—I have none to thank but those that brought me here. But, praise be to God, who has every thing in his power to do as he thinks good, and no man can remove whatever burthen he chooses to put on us. As he said



‘Nothing shall fall on us except what he shall ordain; he is our Lord, and let all that believe in him put their trust in him.’ My parents’ religion is of the Mussulman: they are all circumcised, and their devotions are five times a day; they fast in the month Ramadan; they give tribute according to their law; they are married to four wives, but the fifth is an abomination to them. They fight for their religion, and they travel to the Hedjaz (those that are capable). They don’t eat any meat except what they themselves kill. They do not drink wine nor spirits, as it is held an abomination so to do. They do not associate with any that worship idols, or profane the Lord’s name, or do dishonour to their parents, or commit murder, or bear false witness, or who are covetous, proud, or boastful; for such faults are an abomination unto my religion. They are particularly careful in the education of their children, and in their behaviour, but I am lost to all these advantages: since my bondage I am become corrupt; and I now conclude by begging the Almighty God to lead me into the path that is proper for me, for he alone knows the secrets of my heart and what I am in need of.

“ABON BECR SADIKI.”

“Kingston, Jamaica,

“Sept. 20, 1834.”

The above was written in Arabic. The man speaks English well and correctly for a negro, but does not read or write it. I caused him to read the original, and translate it word by word ; and, from the little knowledge I have of the spoken language, I can safely present you with this version of it as a literal translation. There are other letters of his, and some of his brethren, which I will send you in my next. The letter of the latter, addressed to me by some native Africans, who have obtained their liberty in this city, is written in English by one of them, and is an epistle which, I think, you will read with much interest.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.



## LETTER XXXII.

CAPABILITIES OF NEGROES.

---

TO DR WM. BEATTIE.

Kingston, October 20, 1834.

My dear Sir,

The day after the proceedings described in my last letter took place, I received the following letter from a Member of the House of Assembly—a gentleman generally esteemed for his abilities, as well as for his amiable disposition. The suggestion it offers is one that, I think, is deserving of attention; and it serves, moreover, to exhibit the private feelings of benevolence towards the negro, which can actuate the conduct of those whose public sentiments are not in unison with the opinions of those who are favourable to the abolition of slavery. This letter is from a gentleman who made the most decided stand for what is called colonial interests at the passing of the late measure—from one, in short, who took, what I thought, a very strong part against that measure.

Truth, however, obliges me to add, that a more humane master to his negroes is not to be found. I do not think I have ever witnessed in England kindness, and even affectionate regard to servants, so strikingly displayed, as I have observed in the uniform humanity of this gentleman towards his sable domestics. His letter was to this effect :

“ While perusing the interesting case which occurred yesterday at your court, as reported in the *Herald*, I was struck so forcibly with the advantage with which the Landers, and other explorators of Africa, would derive through the acquisition of such an individual, that I laid down the paper, to suggest to you some observations, which may lead as well to his advantage, as to that of the country of his ancestors. I am delighted that I should have been so fortunate as to be sitting alongside of you when that case was called on. I had often heard the man spoken of, but I never saw him until he stood before you. I had often heard, too, of the beauty of his penmanship ; but the idea I had formed of it fell infinitely short of the specimen you had put into my hands ; and then the able and affecting address delivered on the occasion will long live in my memory, while the interesting history, for which we are indebted to you, cannot fail to insure the gratitude of all beneficent minds. I should hope you would pause,

before you resign that man to obscurity. From his looks, I should think him neither too old, nor constitutionally unfitted for the views I have laid before you. You have been the means of discovering an individual calculated to render, I should think, invaluable assistance to the attempts that are now making to explore the regions around Timbuctoo." \*

\* On my return to England, at the urgent request of Donlan, I applied to those persons interested in African discovery, for employment for him as a guide or servant to some traveller going out to visit Africa. I likewise applied to the Royal Geographical Society, and sent all the papers of the African, both original and translated. In reply to my application on his behalf, I was favoured with the following excellent paper from the Secretary, which, from the soundness of the opinions expressed, and the valuable information respecting the extent of our knowledge of Timbuctoo and its adjoining provinces, I consider well worthy of perusal.

" Royal Geographical Society,

" April 6, 1835.

" I have carefully read the inclosed papers, and should have been very glad if I could have discovered any thing in them likely to interest the Society in the future employment of the person to whom they relate. But it would not be fair to his friends, not to say, frankly, that I do not think there is any chance of this.

" The district of Africa to which he belongs was very long the object of intense curiosity, among those interested in African discovery ; but so much has there been learnt regarding it, especially of late years, that this curiosity is

Shortly after Donlan procured his liberty, I received a letter from a Mr. Angell of Manchester

brought now within far narrower limits. The general aspect of the country, its productions, trade, the physical and moral aspect of its population, and even their distribution into tribes and nations, are all reasonably well known; and what are yet wanting are chiefly positions, accurate surveys, geological and other scientific examinations, but for which an uneducated native is quite unsuited.

"Neither does it appear to me that he could be very serviceable as a guide or protector to a more suitable person. He has been too long out of the country for such a purpose. We know that, within the present day, the greatest revolutions have taken place in his country, and the Fellatah province, in particular, which is now the dominant one, though it is quite modern. He would be thus a stranger himself among his countrymen, rather than any assistance to another stranger; and, possibly, only the more unsuited for this latter purpose, if his birth be really as good as he calls it.

"Were he on the spot, indeed, we should be very glad to question him about Timbuctoo, though he could only add one to several native accounts which we have of it already. Yet, if reasonably well off in Jamaica, I would hardly advise the bringing him here. The attempt to serve him, and to enable him to return to Africa, might fail; and if it succeeded, the advantage to him might be very doubtful. He has made friends where he is,—they would be all to make in Africa; and in a country where the old and helpless are not unfrequently deserted, even by their own children, when they become only a burthen, the prospect to a superannuated stranger cannot be considered inviting.

"A. M.

"Sec. R. G. S. L."



parish, a gentleman whom I have not the honour of knowing, but I understand is one of the most respectable inhabitants of his parish. His letter gives an interesting account of another case similar to that of Donlan, where the negro is a man of education, and was of some rank in his own country. He is now seventy-six years of age, fifty-six of which he has passed in slavery on one property in Manchester. The curious part of his case is this:—he writes a letter in Arabic to Donlan, and states to Mr. Angell that the purport of the letter is to convert Donlan from Mahometanism to the Christian faith; and for this purpose the old African requests of me to be the medium of communication between them. But what is my surprise at finding the letter of the old man, who is so anxious to convert his countryman from the Mussulman creed, commencing in these terms, “In the name of God, merciful and omnipotent, the blessing of God, the peace of his prophet Mahomet!” So much for the old African’s renunciation of Islamism: now for Edward Donlan, who, in a subsequent letter to two highly respectable clergymen of the names of Thomson and Whitehorn, thus writes—

“Reverend Gentlemen,—I beg leave to inform you that I am rejoiced and well pleased in my heart for the great boon I have received in the Testament, both of the old and new law of our



Lord and Saviour, in the Arabic language. I am now very anxious to get a prayer-book, the psalms, and an Arabic grammar—*also a copy of the Alcoran.*”

Now the latter part of the request I think looks like the yearning of one who was not quite weaned from the recollections of his old religion. I do not mean to say there was any hypocrisy in the new profession of either of these persons; I only mean to state my belief, that all the proselytes I have seen in Mahometan countries, have rather engrafted the doctrines of Christianity on the stem of Mahometanism, than plucked up the latter, root and branch, to make way for the former. I have elsewhere stated, that so vague are their notions of the character of the religion they last adopt, that they think it compatible with the doctrines both of it and of their former creed, to believe in each.

“*From B. Angell, Esq. to Dr. Madden.*”

“*Manchester, Jamaica, October 7, 1834.*”

“*Sir,*

“*You will be gratified to learn that Jamaica contains more than one proof of the civilised condition of part of Central Africa, and of the capacity of the negro for learning. The inclosed is written by Robert Peart (or Tuffit), late a slave belonging to Spice-Grove Plantation in this parish, to Abon*

Becr Sadiki, (which he pronounces 'Bou Bakin Sedaik,') with whom he has for some time past carried on a correspondence, inviting him to abjure Mahometanism and embrace the true religion. The purport of the letter is to advise him to request you to be the medium of communication between them.

“The short and simple annals’ of Robert Peart may not be uninteresting to you. He was born in a place called Bouka, in the Mandingo country, nine days’ journey from the sea-side, and near the country of the Foulahs, the capital of which is Timbo. His father, Abon loo de Kadri, was a substantial yeoman, possessing 140 slaves, several cows and horses, and grounds producing quantities of cotton, rice, and provisions, which he exchanged for European and other commodities brought from the coast by Higglers. His family were Mohammedans, as most of the Mandingoes are. He was named Mohammed Kaba: the first son, he says, is always called Mohammed. He was educated partly by his father, but principally by his uncle, Mahommed Batoul, who was a great lawyer, and had designed him for the same profession. He pursued his studies until he was twenty years of age, when he was seized one day as he was walking some distance from home by a party of robbers, carried to the sea-side, and sold to the captain of a slave-ship.

“He has been fifty-six years a slave on one property, has always born an irreproachable character, and maintained a high place in the estimation of his employers. He is now seventy-six, with all his faculties in full vigour, and with the activity of a boy. About twenty years ago he was converted to Christianity, and now says he does not regret his captivity, as it was the means of bringing him to the knowledge of Christ.

“Trusting that I need no apology for troubling you with this communication,

“I remain, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“B. ANGELL.”

“Robert Peart has referred me to a known though anonymous correspondent, for the truth of the following statement: About three years ago, he received from Kingston, by the hands of a boy, a paper written in Africa forty-five years previously. He knew it to be of this date, as the paper purported to have been written in the forty-third year of the age of the King, Allaman Talco, who was thirty-five years old when he (R. P.) left the country. The paper exhorted all the followers of Mahomet to be true and faithful, if they wished to go to Heaven, &c. To my inquiry what became of the paper, he says that,

shortly after it came into his possession, the rebellion broke out, and his wife, in a fright, destroyed it."

*From the negro Tuffit, to his countryman Doulan.*

"In the name of God, Merciful omniscient, the blessing of God, the peace of his prophet Mahomet.

"This is from the hand of Mahomed Caba, unto Bekir Sadiki Scheriffe. If this comes into your hands sooner or later, send me a satisfactory answer for yourself this time by your real name, don't you see I give you my name, Robert Tuffit, and the property is named Spice Grove. I am glad to hear you are master of yourself, it is a heartfelt joy to me, for Many told me about your character. I thank you to give me a good answer, 'Salaam aleikoum.' Edward Doulan, I hear of your name in the paper: the reader told me how so much you write.

(Signed) "ROBERT TUFFIT."

"God bless you, give me

"Manchester parish." an answer by  
Dr. Madden, King's  
Magistrate, Kingston."

"Letter for Edward Doulan,  
from Robert Tuffit."



## ANSWER.

*" From Edward Doulan to Robert Tuffit.*

*" Kingston, Jamaica, October 18, 1834.*

*" Dear Countryman,*

*" I now answer your last letter, my name, in Arabic, is Abon Becr Sadiki, and in Christian language, Edward Doulan, I born in Timbucto, and brought up in Geneh; I finished read the Coran in the country of Gounah, which place I was taken captive in war. My master's name in this country is Alexander Anderson. Now my countryman, God hath given me a faithful man, a just and a good master, he made me free; and I know truly that he has shown mercy to every poor soul under him. I know he has done that justice which our King William the Fourth commanded him to do (God save the king) and may he be a conqueror over all his enemies, from east to west, from north to south, and the blessing of God extend over all his kingdom, and all his ministers and subjects. I beseech you, Mahomed Caba, and all my friends, continue in praying for my friend, my life, and my bread-fruit, which friend is my worthy Dr. Madden, and I hope that God may give him honour, greatness, and gladness, and likewise his generation to come, as long as Heaven and Earth stands. Now,*

my countryman, these prayers that I request of you is greater to me than any thing else I can wish of you ; and also you must pray that God may give him strength and power to overcome all his enemies, and that the King's orders to him be held in his right hand firmly. The honour I have in my heart for him is great ; but God knows the secrets of all hearts. Dear countryman, I also beseech you to remember in your prayers my master Alexander Anderson. He gave me my liberty free and willingly ; and may the Almighty prosper him, and protect him from all dangers.

" Whenever you wish to send me a letter, write it in Arabic language ; then I will understand it properly.

" I am, dear Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" EDWARD DOULAN.

واسء ابوظر الصبى

" To Mr. Robert Tuffit, Manchester."

These letters are selected from a great many, addressed to me by negroes, both in English and in Arabic ; and, if these limits allowed me to send you all of them, I think you would come to the conclusion that the natives of some parts of Africa are not so utterly ignorant as they are represented to

be, and that the negroes generally are as capable of mental improvement as their white brethren,—at least, that is my firm conviction; but it is not from letters, but from oral communications with them, from close observation of their mental qualities, both in the east and in the west, that I have formed that opinion.

The following letter I received from a number of free African negroes of Kingston, signed by four of them; it appears to me to be a curiosity, coming from such persons. I had frequently inquired of some of them respecting their religious opinions; and in this letter they have taken the opportunity of stating them at some length; and, extravagant as they are, and strangely as they are couched, I think they are well worth reading. Some of the ideas are highly poetical, and the language in which they are expressed simple and not inelegant. The letter that follows it is my reply to this communication. The suggestion that is offered in it, of establishing evening-schools in the large towns, on the plan of mutual instruction, they expressed themselves most willing to carry into effect, if they were provided with the necessary books for that purpose. From such schools, conducted solely by native teachers, where such can be found duly qualified, I expect a great deal of good would arise. I trust some benevolent society or individual will take the matter up.

*" To Dr. Madden.*

Kingston, October 2nd, 1834.

" Worthy Sir,

" We have taken this opportunity of addressing those lines to you, hoping that you and Lady's enjoying a perfect state of health, we are sorry to give this uncalled for trouble, hoping it may not prove in any wise as an offence, the matter that give rise to this epistle, your good character that you have evinced and displayed among us that are at present counted as subjects of our king we pray will be rewarded by the Almighty and every person that performs such acts will be rewarded likewise, we desire to tell you what our opinions are not only on worldly but now especially on religious subjects. Many believe that at the day of judgment they are going to be judged as we judge on earth, no it will not be so, we will not be allowed to say one word in answer for ourselves, no one will have that privilege of confronting another or calling the other a fabricator or one that is guilty of falsehood each one must keep his tongue close to the roof of his mouth, wordly acts and deeds cannot be done before that great tribunal, be you high or low, rich or poor there is no favour shewn to one more than to the other for we are all to stand in one line as martial men and soldiers close to each other with no space between our ranks: at the Al-



mighty power, every person is fixed to the earth as if they were posts planted in the ground and cannot move except in tumbling having no other power granted to them.

“ Oh ! my dear Sir, this day of judgment, that we consider light and simple, we will find to be a very sorrowful—a dismal and a mournful day whatever punishment we are to receive we have not the power to say one word for ourselves now in what manner we are going to be judged on the last day ; we will explain. When a woman bear a child into this world, the Almighty sends two of his angels to guard the infant and not to leave it until the day of death one is placed on the right hand of the child and one on the left and it is those angels that lead and follow that child through life for we go not through the world by our own power, we cannot see those angels but every good act or deed that we do they bear record against us, be it good or bad, the one on the right side records all the good deeds, and the one to the left bears record of the evil and by this record of those heavenly messengers we are judged whosoever gets clear of those two books they are clear for ever and ever indeed.

“ Many people do not believe such things will be of a truth until they see them with their own eyes but then it will be too late to believe them. Many souls are buried in the bosom of the earth



—every day and they are continually calling on God, three times a day tho we cannot hear them but the Almighty hears them: the good souls cry hear us our Master and our Maker, we believed you had promised that if any person keep your commandments and do good to his fellow-creatures you have a resting place for him in heaven, we have been long waiting in our graves for that removal and now we beg thee to do away with the world for we wishes to go to our resting place, Then all the bad souls cry out we beg you not to do away with the world we lay in torment but much greater pains are to come, so we beg thee to keep up the world and not to do away with it. We see plainly that every nation have a book towards the Almighty, all condemning each other. The nation of Mandingo condemn no books whatsoever but we do not agree with the readers of them, no nation have a leaf that tells the readers of them to do ill, every book tells the readers that they must endeavour to avoid badness and not let the vanity of this world take up all their attention, the vanity of this world is only two or three days high living! we die to-morrow and leave all things behind us, for we cannot carry any thing away with us, we must remember our first coming into life those who commanded the world and carried all before them they are now dead, and

have carried nothing along with them, so we must expect that we will die and be as they are. All those that are in authority the Almighty made them to be so from the formation of the world the poor class the Almighty made them so for he consider that if he had made them all of the same sort there would have been no living among us and for that he made this division, of high and low rich and poor, these things are miracles done by his wonderful power. He gave a great charge to those who from the creation he so appointed in high places not to oppress the poor class: and all those that do justice to them, and suffer no advantage to be taken of them, the Almighty will shower down blessings on them and their offsprings for ever, but those that will oppress the poor, at the great day they will go through a long and severe punishment, God will condemn them to never-ending torment such as king Pharaoh suffered in a raging fire for his evil deeds to the children of Israel, seven times a day he is set on fire, and from the crown of his head, as a torch is burnt down to the soles of his feet until he dissolves into ashes and in a moment he is renewed as if nothing had happened to him and thus he is continually made up and dissolves for seven times every day, the heat of that furnace wherein he suffers is seven times hotter than our furnaces on the earth, and his tears of remorse are like unto

water that has been thrown on the ground, which cannot be gathered together any more. The writer of this epistle William Rainsford comes from the Mandingo country, a place called Sancran 'tis far from the sea-coast; none of African nation possess better qualifications than the people of Sancran, they have all the refinement of learning, and it is well known by all my countrymen I was brought up as a warrior from a little boy and was carried away before I had the opportunity of finishing my education, at which time Admiral Rowley who brought our present majesty to this island of Jamaica was on the station. We now take our leave for this time and remain your humble servants.

“ P. S. The undersigned present their compliments to you and Lady.

“ WILLIAM RAINSFORD.

“ BENJIMIN COCHRAN.

“ BENJEMIN LARTEN.

“ EDWARD DONLAN.”

*To William Rainsford, Benjamin Cochran, Benjamin Larten, and Edward Donlan.*

Kingston, October 15, 1835.

My good friends,

I have not had time till now to answer your letter. I read it with much attention, and that

part of it which speaks approvingly of my conduct is very gratifying to me. I believe I have done my duty towards you ; and whenever I leave this country, that belief will afford me much satisfaction. But I have two or three words to say on the subject of the prospects that are now before you, and of the necessity that exists for your improvement to enable you to take advantage of them. I would entreat of you, who are more enlightened than the majority of your brethren, to give good counsel, and by all the means in your power to render them industrious, peaceable, and patient during this term of apprenticeship, in order that their friends may have no occasion to be ashamed of them, and that those who think ill of them may have no opportunity of injuring their character, and no cause or pretext for calling for martial law, to put new restraints upon them. The new law is strong enough for their protection, (if it is well administered,) and any attempts to violate it on their part would be an act of folly, that would bring them into great trouble. I regret to see that more pains are not taken by the friends of the negroes to improve their minds. This ought not to be the case, for the success of the new measure, which is now in operation for the advantage of the negro, depends very much on his own good conduct. If he is to continue the same ignorant degraded man which slavery

made and kept him, it were better, I tell you, he did not cease to be a slave. What good is to be expected from men, however free, who still retain the vices and the defects of slaves. I need not tell you, you now have motives to be industrious, and inducements to become enlightened, which you have not had before.

*Liberty* means the power of doing every thing lawful, that is good and advantageous to ourselves without injury to the community. But how is the ignorant man to judge of what is good or evil for himself or others? Religious instruction is of the first importance; and where it is of a good kind, no other may be necessary for the regulation of moral conduct. But for the encouragement of industrious habits, the direction of civil duties, the knowledge and understanding of the advantages of *freedom*, and the lawful use of all good means to secure its rights—general instruction is likewise necessary. By general instruction, I mean such a plain and simple kind of education, as may enable the negro to read and write, and furnish his mind with employment for that leisure which he now may be inclined to spend either in excess or idleness. A man who can read and write has a great advantage over one who cannot. If he remain poor, he is more likely to be content; while without instruction, if he become rich, he has not the power of holding



up his head amongst his equals who are superior to him. I would have the negroes establish schools of mutual instruction ; I would have them teach themselves, and not trust to others for their improvement. The time is come when there is no advantage in their ignorance, and no prospects of prosperity except in their conduct as rational beings capable of instruction, and, therefore, qualified for freedom. I write these things to you, for you seem to know I am the friend of your people ; and as I know you are men of intelligence, indebted to your own good conduct for your freedom, I call upon you to assist your poorer countrymen in the improvement of their minds, to devote some portion of your leisure time to their instruction, and to assist in the establishment of evening-schools for their improvement, which need not interfere with the ordinary duties of the apprentices.

I do not think so badly of the intelligence of the negroes, as to imagine there is a district in which negroes might not be found who can read and write. The books that are necessary for such schools, I think, might be procured for you in England without expense, from some society favourable to the diffusion of knowledge amongst all classes, whether black or white. The teachers, it may be thought, would find their labours too fatiguing to continue without emolument. It

would not, however, be so, if each were to take the weekly duty in his turn ; and were the schools conducted on a plan that would be explained to you of mutual instruction, so as to make the trouble to the instructors as light as possible.

*My grand object in recommending these schools, is to teach the negroes to depend on themselves for their own improvement, and not on the charity of others for those advantages which want the most powerful of all stimulants for their success—namely, self-dependence and self-exertion.*

If these schools entail expense, which I have not specified, that expense I do not hesitate to tell you should be cheerfully encountered by all those of your complexion whom God has blessed with the means of assisting others in less fortunate circumstances, not only in this city, but in the island, for the honour of the negro character, which it is the desire of your friends to vindicate from the reproach of an incapacity for mental improvement.

I earnestly desire to impress on your attention, the object which the British parliament had in view, in allotting a time of probation, or apprenticeship, as it is termed, for initiating a race of slaves into a knowledge of the duties, and a proper understanding of the privileges of British subjects. That term of probation will be of advantage to the negroes, if they remain without improve-

ment; and of as little benefit to their masters, if the chains of slavery have only fallen from the limbs, while the still worse chains of ignorance remain on the minds of the enfranchised people.

You have entered somewhat fully into the tenets of your religious creed. It is not for me to say, whether they are right or wrong; you think them right. God knows all things; if they are wrong, I only hope he will convince you timely of their error. I do not believe in many of them, I plainly tell you; and I could not understand them, I also assure you, if my acquaintance with your country, and some knowledge of the prevailing creeds of the people of Africa, had not given me a clue to the sources from which they have been taken.

The condemnation of the wicked, after the manner of Pharaoh's punishment, is an alteration of a Jewish legend of the Talmud, which has no place in the Torah, or any other book of the Hebrew Scriptures. The attendance of the two angels on every human being, from his coming into the world till his departure from it, is a tenet of the Koran, which I would subscribe to, for the sake of the pleasing nature of the idea, if I saw the necessity for any other guardianship than that of the Spirit of God for man's protection.

The mode of conducting the final judgment of the world is partly taken from the Koran, though the greater part of your description is merely a



Mussulman tradition. Yet what does it signify, I would ask you, how the trial is conducted? But of how much importance is it, that we should be entitled, by our conduct in this world, to the mercy of the great Judge of all in the next!

Now the forgetfulness of the duties of religion, while we devote our attention to the most trivial of its doctrines—the minutæ of which a doubtful tradition may have handed down, or a better authority may have noticed briefly and obscurely—is a species of folly which is called superstition; and it has done more harm to the world than the unbelief of all the nations which have ever been denounced or exterminated, by your prophet or any other. Superstition is not the folly of one religion only: most creeds have a tincture of it; but they are invariably the weakest of the followers of any sect, and generally the most worthless individuals, who make a virtue of superstition, and a bug-bear of religion.

You tell me you see plainly that “every nation has a book” to direct it towards the Almighty, and that every nation condemns the other’s book. Your nation however, I am glad to hear, is an exception, and that the “Mandingoes condemn no books, though they agree not with their readers;” and you have very properly and charitably added, that no leaf of any book tells the reader of it to do ill. Every book that is good, I agree with you,

tells the reader that the vanity of the world is of no avail—that it is as you have well said, but “two or three days’ high living,” and there is an end of life, and we leave it as we came into it—poor and naked, despoiled of every thing.

It may be collected from your letter, that you profess the faith of Islam—a religion which was founded twelve centuries ago, on the ruins of paganism in Arabia ; and inasmuch as it promulgated the unity of God for its leading doctrine, I believe it effected good, and I have known a great many good men belonging to it. I have only *these* faults to find with it, that it was intended but for one people, and that people a very small portion of the human race ; that it inculcated intolerance, (that is to say) the persecution of those who could not bring themselves to believe in it ; that it sanctioned injustice, one of the worst forms of which is slavery ; that it debased men’s notions of a future state, by making Paradise a place of sensual pleasures, and Hell a receptacle for all who resisted the power of your prophet, or disbelieved the doctrines he advanced. But the followers of a sect are not, I trust, accountable for the fanaticism of its founder, nor even the unreasonableness of the doctrines he has prescribed for their belief ; you will, therefore, be charitable enough to consider me perfectly sincere, when I assure you, that after observing the religions that are practised in



very many countries, I might say in all parts of the world, I still prefer my own to any I have seen. In opposition to yours, I consider that mine was intended, by its founder, to apply to the whole human race ; that the purity of its character is superior to that of Islamism ; that it inculcates forbearance to its enemies, and not extermination ; that oppression of every kind is hateful to its law ; that slavery has no authority for its injustice, and that the rewards it promises have no character of sensuality which is at variance with the spiritual idea of the Supreme Being.

For these reasons, which one better versed in religious matters might greatly multiply, I sincerely wish you entertained the same conviction of its excellence that I do. I do not expect that any arguments of mine can realize that wish. My only hope is, that persuasion may eventually accomplish for my religion what the sword, twelve centuries ago, did partially for yours.

Yours, my good friends,

Very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXXIII.

PRICE OF LIBERTY.

---

TO J. HAMILTON, Esq.

Kingston, October 25, 1834.

My dear Sir,

The eighth clause of the amended Abolition Act enabled the apprentice to redeem himself from servitude, upon payment to his master of the appraised value of his services. This clause, had it been so worded as to have prevented the misconception of its intent, would have been the most valuable clause in the whole Act. As it stands, the power of procuring a reasonable award is so limited, that I have latterly been obliged to dissuade almost every applicant from applying for a valuation. The corporation have proved stronger than the British Parliament. When a negro applies to the special justice to purchase his liberty, the latter calls upon the master to appoint a local magistrate, to proceed to a valuation. When the two magistrates meet, they name a third, who

must also be a local magistrate ; and, according to the age, sex, health, and occupation of the negro, they ought to decide. There is one thing obvious at the first glance : there are two local magistrates, and one special justice ; and it is evident the interests of the owner have been most looked to in this arrangement. The matter respecting the mode of conducting the valuation is so vaguely expressed in the Act, that the amount to be adjudicated is left entirely to the discretion of the magistrates, without reference to any scale of valuation ; and this unfortunate defect has been the occasion of an immense deal of misunderstanding between the special and local magistrates. In some instances the estimate has been as high as £170, a sum which no negro certainly has sold for, for many a year in Jamaica ; in others, it has been as low as £20 for an adult, and from £10 to £15 for children. Recollect this is in currency, about one-third less in sterling. In Kingston, there have been more applications from negroes to purchase their liberty, than, I believe, in all the rest of the island, with the exception of Spanish Town. In all, eighty apprentices have obtained their freedom before me, either by valuation or mutual agreement ; and the average valuation has been £25. In one instance, a tradesman was valued at £80 ; in the others, it varied from £16 to £35. I have been now almost a year in the island ; I have at-

tended a great many slave-sales, and I have seen no negro sell for more than £30; and I believe the very last slave that had been levied on for an owner's debt, and sold in Jamaica by public auction, I saw put up, on the day previous to the 1st of August, on the steps of Harty's Tavern, in this town,—the last exhibition of this kind that was to disgust the beholder; and, in this instance, the *property* put up was a young woman, strong and healthy, and she was knocked down to the highest bidder, which happened to be the only one, for £5. 6s. 8d. But it may be said, these sales are no criterion of the value of negroes on plantations; that the negroes sold by public auction, with their iron collars about their necks, were brought to the market from the jail, and, consequently, were worthless characters. In the first place, though they might come from the workhouse, it by no means followed that they were there for crime, a vast number being there for their owners' debts. In the next place, the crimes for which the negroes used to be sent to the workhouse, excepting that of running away, were not generally of a character to deter people from purchasing them. The great qualification looked to in a negro is ability to work; and I have seen a great number of able-bodied men sold for less than £30. Now, there is another criterion, the price that negroes have fetched on plantations that have been sold for six months



previous to August. Various coffee-plantations, especially, have been sold with the negroes ; and the purchase, in no instance that has come to my knowledge, has exceeded £30 a head ; and this sum, in three or four instances, even including the purchase of the land.

In the high and palmy state of the prosperity of Jamaica, Bryan Edwards estimates the annual clear value of every negro on a plantation to his master at £10 a head. It were well for the planters if a negro's labour was worth that now, bearing in mind that the master has to feed, clothe, and lodge the negro, to pay doctors' bills and work-house-fees for him, and taxes likewise, and that the risk of life is also to be taken into consideration. I think all the first items, however economically the supplies be managed, cannot be estimated at an amount under £15 per annum, which, for six years, is £90, and that the clear profit to the owner from each negro's labour, for the term of six years, cannot be fairly estimated beyond £45 currency ; and this sum, in my opinion, is as much at the highest calculation as any adult field-negro can be said to be worth, for the term of six years, taking into consideration the reduced labour that can be now legally obtained from him.

In Kingston, where the negroes are non-pre-dials, and their time of servitude shorter by two years than the field-negroes, and the difficulty of

obtaining regular wages or employment for them greater than in the country, the value of their services is consequently so much proportionally abridged, and therefore my average valuations have been about £25. It is needless to say any thing of difficulties in such matters: they could not be inconsiderable where one arbitrator sometimes valued the worth of the services in question at £100, and his brother arbitrator at £25. But I would be doing a great injustice to the magistrates of Kingston, if I did not acknowledge there are some gentlemen among them in whom I found a spirit of impartial justice practically displayed on every occasion in which I fortunately happened to be associated with them;—I allude to Mr. Dallas, the Custos of Port Royal, to Dr. Chamberlaine, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Jerdan, and, I might add, Mr. Evans; but, except the latter, these gentlemen were very seldom suffered by the proprietors to be associated with me. Now, what I have contended for in these valuations is, that the valuers have nothing to do with the injury inflicted on slave property, by the Abolition Act; the simple question that should come before them is, what are the services of this negro worth to his or her employer for the term of six or four years, taking into consideration the health, age, sex, and employment of the person to be valued. For the injury done to slavery in general, the

compensation, however inadequate it may be, is the fund that is devoted to the colonists for their indemnity. It may, perhaps, amount to £25 sterling; now, this amount in currency, together with that which was the average of my valuations, would amount to about £60 currency; and this sum, I maintain, is more than negroes have been worth for a great many years: at different epochs the price of slaves has varied with the increase or diminution of importation: about seventy years ago, the average number of negroes carried off the coast of Africa for the New World, according to Raynal, was 80,000 per annum, for some years. Edwards, at a period twenty years later, and perhaps with more truth, fixes the number at 20,000 annually; while Anderson raises it to 100,000. I believe in these, as in all other extreme statements, truth may be found to lie between. Edwards admits that 610,000 negroes were imported into Jamaica between 1700 to 1786, and this amount he reckons one-third of the whole number imported during the same interval into other parts of the British Colonies, the whole amount being 2,130,000 for that period. About the same period, namely, from 1702 and 1775, Brydges says half a million were imported into Jamaica, and that the average annual importation was from five to ten thousand; but in all, he informs us, "50,000 negroes were



annually transported beyond the reach of their own tyrants ;" he forgot to add, "and were placed within the reach of ours." He admits, however, that the drain upon Africa, to the period of the abolition of the slave-trade, "might have certainly peopled continents and supplied armies which would have over-run the world." Montgomery Martin estimates the total number of negroes stolen from their country at thirty millions ; of that number I should not think thirty thousand natives of Africa are now in existence in our colonies : of their descendants, both in America and the West Indies, there may be about three millions and a half, of which number there are in all our colonies about eight hundred thousand, but in our West Indies, not much above six hundred and fifty thousand. So much for the millions who "might have over-run continents," but who pined and perished in slavery, in order that we Christians might not have to drink tea without sugar, or those who disliked tea have to breakfast without coffee. Now, for the value of those animal machines, who, "when they stand up, exhibit a human face,—these creatures, in fact, that are men." In 1510, King Ferdinand sent out a cargo of negroes, as a private adventure, to his own possessions in Hispaniola ; by which speculation his Majesty must have been a considerable gainer, for nearly thirty years later the first Genoese com-

pany, for the sale of slaves, got from fifty to two hundred ducats a-head for Africans.

In 1689, a pamphlet called "The Groans of the Plantations" has some very valuable information on the subject of the price of negroes at that period. "Formerly (says the writer) we might send to Guinea for negroes when we wanted them, and they stood us in about £7 a-head. The account is short and plain, for they cost about the value of 40s. a-head in Guinea, and the freight was £5 for every one that was brought alive and could walk over the ship's side. But now we are shut out from this trade, and a company is forced on us from whom we must have our negroes, and no other way. A company of London merchants have got a patent, excluding all others from furnishing the plantations with negroes, some great men being joined with them, with whom we are not able to contend; but those great men might have had some better exercise for their generosity than the pressing too hard upon *industrious people*. And now we buy our negroes at the rate of an engrossed commodity, the common rate of a *good negro on ship-board being twenty pound, and we are forced to scramble for them in so shameful a manner that one of the great burdens of our lives is going to buy negroes. But we must have them; we cannot do without them.*"

In a manuscript journal of Hampdon Needham,



in possession of his grandson Major-General Needham, quoted by Montgomery Martin, the price of negroes is thus stated in 1750: "Bought ten negroes at £50 each; and in 1747, the following calculation appears in the Board of Trade papers—500 negroes at £30 each." In 1777, slaves averaged in the West Indies from £25 to £30. In 1791, Edwards says the common price was £50; boys and girls from £40 to £45; an infant £5. In the intermediate period between 1777 and 1790, the average price was from £35 to £45 currency, on an average of upwards of twenty cargoes, (see Report, Jamaica House of Assembly, 1792.) At this period, the price had advanced from £60 to £70 currency: and Edwards, in his estimate of the expenses of a sugar-plantation, values the negroes at £70, at the period when he wrote on the West Indies. But a very singular difference in the estimated value of convicted and executed negroes appears to have taken place within the last fifty years. I have now before me the original record of the slave trials of the parish of St. Andrews, from 1746 to 1782, a period of thirty-six years. In this record, I find wherever a negro is sentenced to execution, the court invariably fixes his value at £40. Now this was in the prosperous times of Jamaica. But in the late rebellion of 1831, I find, to my great astonishment, the value considerably increased of

the negro who is ordered to be executed. In 1823, in the Duke of Manchester's time, during Mr. Bullock's administration,—eight negroes were executed for "compassing and imagining the death of the white people" (no actual rebellion having taken place against the majesty of that community); it was one of the many conspiracies of former times: the indemnity in these cases granted by the court was £50 for one; £100 each for three others; and £65, £70, £80, and £90 each, for the other four. So that the proprietor, however little he might have desired to have profited by such means, received £605 for his executed slaves, while, for as many living negroes, when the compensation money is paid, he will receive from the British Government probably about £240.

This indemnity ought to be abolished; for it is impossible to look on it in any other light than as having the appearance, at least, of a bounty on rebellions—a bonus on negro executions.

The price of slaves in the West Indies, at any time since the commencement of this traffic, never averaged, for a period of ten years, £55 sterling a-head. So much has been paid for Creole slaves in Jamaica, it is said, as £300 currency; but this was for artisans, such as carpenters and coppersmiths, taught these profitable trades in the colony. Altogether, I would say the average price of all the

slaves that have been imported into the West Indies may be estimated at about £40 sterling.

In Rome, a learned slave has been sold for a sum equivalent to £833; a stage-player, according to Dickson, for still more; many of the most famous doctors of ancient Rome were slaves; what the physicians fetched in the market I do not know, but I should suppose they were more valuable than they are at present in any country. The modern doctors, however, have turned the tables on the community; for now, instead of being sold, they sell the public, at least that part of it that is confided to their care, when they choose to retire from their practice;—ay, literally sell their patients, for a price which may vary from £500 sterling to £2000; and, what is worse, the unfortunate patients, who are thus regularly bought and sold, have no voice in the transfer, but are “led by the nose” to the establishments of their new possessors, “as tenderly as asses are.”

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## LETTER XXXIV.

EXPENSES OF AN ESTATE UNDER  
PRESENT SYSTEM.

---

TO MAJOR HOPKINS.

Kingston, Nov. 1, 1834.

My dear Sir,

The system of management formerly pursued on estates ; the mode of disposing of their produce, and of procuring the supplies ; and lastly, the loans contracted on the calculation of a continuance of extraordinary returns, may be looked upon as the immediate causes of the general depression of West India interests—I may say, of their ruin. I have taken a good deal of pains to inform myself thoroughly on this subject ; and the information I have received is from gentlemen commercially and agriculturally connected with West India interests, on whose opinions and statements I have a perfect reliance.

The system formerly pursued, of transacting colonial business, was this :—The merchant, in consideration of the advantages of the sale of the



produce of an estate, usually consented to make advances on the returns, and, in course of time, to lend large sums of money on the security of the property. In many cases, he undertook the mercantile management, expressly on the condition of taking up the debts of the proprietor, and becoming a mortgagee, for sums which the estate might have possibly sold at that period, but which now, in a vast number of instances, would hardly fetch the interest, for ten years, on the capital lent.

It is not to be supposed that a merchant will lend large sums of money on a precarious property, without advantages commensurate with the risk he encounters. It is very evident that the mere legal interest of five per cent. would not be a sufficient advantage for the hazard of such advances. I by no means desire to be understood to say, that any undue advantage was taken of the proprietor. The mere commission on the sales—the interest on the loan, were not adequate to the risk and inconvenience of the lender; therefore the merchant was justified in monopolising all those advantages which could be obtained from the purchase of supplies, the freighting of his own ships, the underwriting of the same; and it could not be expected that he would beat down his own prices, where there was no bargaining to reduce them. The attorney sent home the list of the supplies; the merchant sent it, perhaps, by his

clerk to the house that the articles were usually procured from. They may be purchased at twelve months' credit. It may be customary for the proprietor to pay at six months. Here is five per cent. between interest and commission. But suppose cash is paid down for the supplies, the further advantage would accrue of five, perhaps ten per cent. discount on the invoice. The freight during the war was at one period so high as 12s. The merchants, in many instances, became ship-owners; and it was not to be supposed that the merchant, who freighted his own ship, would do more than inquire the current freight of the day, for the regulation of his own charges; but it is not to be expected he would hunt the docks for the lowest that could be found.

One merchant, I am informed, in eight or nine years, cleared £40,000 by a ship under 400 tons, which might have cost about £6000. At that period the West India merchants were the leading underwriters at Lloyd's: the premium of insurance was extremely high; and it was not the merchant's interest to reduce either the freight or the insurance. But had not the proprietor the option of going to any other house he might consider more advantageous to him? His merchant, however, might say to him, and perhaps with a great deal of truth, "I am very willing to give up your business, provided

any other house will take up the debt of £20,000 or £30,000, for which I hold your mortgage."

Had the proprietor the power of transacting his own business, he unquestionably might have effected a very considerable saving in its management—a saving that might be estimated, perhaps, at very nearly the amount of his present income.

The following are the present charges on his produce, from its shipment to its sale:—

Commission on sales . . .	2½	per cent.
Brokerage on sugar . . .	¼	per cent.
Insurance . . . . .	50	per cent.
Commission on ditto . . .	10	per cent.
Freight on ditto . . . .	5	per cent.
Ditto on coffee . . . . .	6 6d.	per cwt.
Duty on sugar . . . . .	24	per cwt.
Ditto on rum . . . . .	9	per gallon.
Ditto on coffee . . . . .	6d.	per lb.

The following queries respecting West Indian produce and supplies, I addressed to a gentleman who is largely connected with the trade to the West Indies ; and, being fully assured of his accuracy and intelligence, I send you his replies.

1st Query—What may be the total amount of the supplies, clothing, herrings, medicines, and all contingencies necessary for the negroes on an estate where there are three hundred apprentices ?

Answer—About two thousand pounds.

2nd Query—What is your opinion of the comparative advantage to the proprietor of finding the negro as he is at present found in all things essential to his maintenance ; or of the substitution of wages,—say a maccaroni, or one shilling sterling a day, and allowing the negro to find himself, taking into account, that when he gets wages he will be called upon to pay rent for his house and grounds, either in work or money ?

Answer—No doubt, if the negroes would continue to work as they did previously to the abolition of slavery, it would prove more beneficial to the master, and much more to their own comfort and advantage : instead of the compulsory measures heretofore adopted by the master, he would have the labour of men stimulated by reward, and would have it in his power to part with those who misconducted themselves ; and by the same rule, the negro would have the power of quitting a master for mal-treatment. But the negroes would not be disposed to do the same work, or take an interest in the cultivation of a property, if they had no home or grounds upon it to give them an interest in it, and cause them to appreciate the sweets of a home for which they would be indebted to their own industry.

3rd Query—What may be the annual amount and value of herrings exported to the West Indies



and required on each estate having 300 negroes on it?

Answer—From sixty to seventy thousand barrels are exported annually for the use of the negroes, nearly all for Jamaica, a few only being sent to St. Kitts. The price per barrel, containing 220 lbs. of fish, exclusive of salt and pickle, averages 22s. For each estate of 300 negroes, about 100 barrels, value £110, are required.

4th Query—Do you consider herrings a nutritious article of food? Are they superior to the shads that are procured from America?

Answer—Herrings are decidedly the most nutritious and wholesome of all descriptions of cured fish. The annual quantity cured is about four hundred thousand barrels, of which more than one-half is consumed in Great Britain.

5th Query—Would the reduction of duty on colonial produce benefit the West Indian planter or the British public?

Answer—The planter unquestionably would derive the benefit from any adequate reduction. The reduction is due to the planter; the tax was imposed as a war duty.

6th Query—Has excessive taxation had a worse influence on West India prosperity than the system of management hitherto pursued, or the general effect of the evils attending slavery?

Answer—I think heavy taxation has had an influence on colonial prosperity, more directly injurious than any other cause.

7th Query—What effect on West India prosperity would the equalisation of the duties of East and West India produce have on the latter?

Answer—A ruinous effect on the cultures of the West Indies.

The answer to my fifth query attributes, in my opinion, too beneficial an influence to the reduction of duty on colonial produce to the planter. It is very doubtful whether the reduction of that duty would now most benefit the producer or the consumer, whatever it might formerly have done. I can show you, from the testimony of a planter, that the West Indians considered themselves a ruined body before these duties were imposed at all. There is a very rare pamphlet entitled "The Groans of the Plantations," written in 1689, only thirty-four years after the conquest of Jamaica. It is written by a planter, and the object is to prove that heavy duties have been the ruin of the planters. He styles his publication, "A true account of their grievous and extreme sufferings by the heavy impositions and other hardships relating more particularly to the island of Barbadoes in 1689. In his prefatory notice he says, "You have here the case of the plantations

presented to your view, which you will find to be most lamentable; you will find, that as the old duties upon sugar did fleece us, so the addition of the new doth flea us. And you will likewise find, that when we treat of these matters, our minds are sometimes under great disturbances. There are some things that make even wise men mad, and, therefore, we do not pretend to that high attainment; and it must not be wondered at if, in the anguish of our souls, we let fall some expressions that seem little better than ravings."

The planters at that period unquestionably had great cause for complaint against the cruel impositions of the mother country. Elsewhere, the writer I have just quoted observes, "Formerly we accounted ourselves a part of England; but upon the King's restoration we were in effect made foreigners and aliens." But in one of the Groans he adds: "We renounce the doctrine of Grotius, that colonies owe an observance but not an obedience to the mother country."

Another Groan in reference to an application to King James for relief from taxation, whom the planters appear to have reminded of some royal promise of relief made to them, states that the planters were informed by the Minister of State, "that it was very indecent, not to say undutiful, to tax the King with his promise."

But now comes the Groan I alluded to, "Most



of us planters are behindhand and in debt, *and so we were before the impositions gave us their helping hand.*" There is hardly an early writer that does not allude to the embarrassments of the planters. Sloane speaks of them as being general in his time. Browne says, "The major part of the planters are seldom out of debt." There must be some cause for this, which the author of the *Groans* has not noticed. The cause is too evident for the generality of writers on the West Indies to think to take the trouble of making obvious. I find it, however, admirably pointed out in a few quaint words, in an old pamphlet written in 1689, called "*An Answer to the Groans of the Plantations,*"—"demonstrating," says the author, "that the taking off the impositions on sugar would not be one farthing advantage to the plantations." (This I do not think.) "But all this while," he continues, "he (the author of the *Groans*) lays not the saddle on the right horse; though he seems to impose on us that absurd notion that all taxes laid on commodities are paid by those that breed or raise them, and not by the expenders. And yet for all this, there was no reason to cry out, 'the plantations are ruined! 'twere a mercy to make away with ourselves! 'tis our hard lot to live deprived of the comforts of life!' with abundance of the like kind of exclamations. But I think



the gentleman in this hath so much outrun the constable, that I may modestly desire him to tell us, whether the people do live there (in the colonies) yet, or what is become of them? Whether they are all in jails for debt, or have starved in the streets? But contrary to this, as *perhaps no people in the world have been more remarkable for a luxurious way of living, so it may be more proper to ask whether they have in any measure retrenched those extravagant expenses that were wont to abound amongst them, or have yet learned what providence and good husbandry is?* ”

I now proceed to give you some idea of the expenses of a sugar-plantation, taken from the books and documents of a proprietor who has been kind enough to place them in my hands, and the correctness of which I have no doubt of. And once for all I disclaim every motive of hostility to the interests of these colonies. My nearest friends and connexions, as you know, are connected with them; and in drawing your attention to the expensive system of management that is pursued, and to the attractions that I plainly see must be made in that system if the estates are to be carried on for the benefit of the proprietors, I am doing that which I know is a thankless and an invidious task, but one, nevertheless, which I would willingly press

on the attention of every West India proprietor who is living in the mother country.

The estate I allude to is one of the best managed in the island of Jamaica. The attorney is an intelligent, industrious, and honourable man. The number of negroes on the property is 300. The account is for the year 1833, and is sworn to by the overseer. The returns for the year are 300 hogsheads of sugar, and 146 puncheons of rum. The total disbursements in Jamaica, covering all contingencies, are £3792 currency. The total disbursements at home for supplies amount to £1500 sterling; a very low sum, owing to the proprietor's economical mode of purchasing the supplies. The sum total of the expenses then is, in sterling, about £3800.

And what are the returns? Produce sold in the island £395 currency, and nett value of 300 hogsheads of sugar, and 146 puncheons of rum sold in England; the total nett value of which may be estimated from the prices of that period. The sugar leaving a nett after paying duties and all charges from shipment to sale, of about £10 sterling a hogshead: the rum from £8 to £10 a puncheon. Some idea of the bill of sale of the former may be formed from one before me for thirty hogsheads of sugar, sold in the same year, and belonging to same proprietor—

## SALE.

30 hogsheads, nett weight 421½ cwt. at 50s. £1054 13 9

## CHARGES.

	£	s.	d.
Dock rates, &c. - -	14	7	6
Customs - - -	511	6	0
Freight, &c. . . .	108	10	11
Interest on duty, freight, &c. .	8	1	7
Brokerage . . . .	5	5	6
Commission . . . .	13	3	8
	<hr/>		
	£660	15	0 2
			<hr/>
			£660 15 2
			<hr/>
			£393 18 7

Being the small residue of produce sold to the amount of a thousand and fifty-four pounds, out of which the proportionate expenses of the estate have yet to be defrayed before the unfortunate proprietor has to look for a miserable balance clear of all deductions.

Now let us see what the expenses of the estate were for that year, in the island.

I find the following charges in currency—

Paid for salary of overseer . . . .	£200	0	0
Paid for salary of attorney . . . .	350	0	0
Paid for salary of book-keeper . . . .	80	0	0
Paid for salary of book-keeper . . . .	70	0	0
Paid for salary of book-keeper . . . .	60	0	0
Paid for salary, clerks to do. . . . .	70	0	0
Paid for salary of carpenter . . . . .	160	0	0
	<hr/>		
For salaries alone	£990	0	0

But some deduction should be made from the amount of Attorney's salary, which is a moderate charge, in lieu of commission, as this sum includes his remuneration for the charge of an adjoining pen, on which there are about seventy negroes.

	£.	s.	d.
The charge for workhouse-fees is . . . . .	3	17	4
Medical attendance at 5s. per ann. each . . . . .	75	5	0
Taxes on slaves, stock, and land . . . . .	105	1	6
Usual allowance for Christmas cheer . . . . .	10	13	4
Hired gangs to dig cane-holes, at 7s. per acre . . . . .	362	5	0
For thirty young steers, at £18 each . . . . .	540	0	0
For ten young heifers, at £17 each . . . . .	170	0	0
"Equal to 5,590 days of labour of able negroes, at 2s. per day" . . . . .	582	5	10
"614 days labour of second gang, at 1s. 8d. a day" . . . . .	51	3	4

The last two items are not easily understood, but I presume they are average estimates of the customary expenses for jobbers. The other charges which I have not taken notice of, are chiefly for lumber, staves, wharfage, and, under any management, would be indispensable.

Now this property, I repeat, is one of the best managed in the island; and, perhaps, the chief reason that it is so, is, that it is not in debt. But yet, what returns can bear up against such expenses? What would be thought of a farm in England, not exceeding nine hundred acres, a third of which is planted in its staple produce, the



salaries of the managers of which alone is nearly £1000 currency?

This £1000 a year would go a long way in paying wages to the labourers, at the ordinary price of jobbed labour in this island—a maccaroni or a shilling sterling a day, which is about £15. 10s. sterling a year. Of the 300 negroes on the estate, I will suppose one half capable of earning wages at that rate; the sum total of one year's wages would then amount to £2,325 sterling, for a more effective gang than is generally to be found among a similar number of negroes. The saving in the salaries and supplies that are necessary under the present system would amply pay the wages of the free labourers; and one-third more of serviceable labour at least might be obtained from the paid labourer, than is now to be got from his unpaid toil. But the planters say the negroes will not work for wages: I can only say, that my experience is altogether opposite to theirs on this point. Hitherto, the apprentices have not only cheerfully worked for wages, in the few instances in which it has been paid to them, but wherever they have been well treated, they have even been satisfied with moderate wages. Night-work, I am aware, they will not do, as they have done it heretofore, for any wages; neither is it desirable that they should.

On the property of a gentleman who is one of

the most humane owners in the island, I visited the works during crop time one morning, at a very early hour. The men, who were scumming the sugar when I entered, I observed appeared worn out with fatigue and watching. They had then been at work twenty-four hours without intermission, day and night; it was then five o'clock in the morning: they had gone to work at the same hour on the preceding day, and were to continue at labour till seven o'clock in the evening of that day,—in all, making thirty-eight hours of constant labour.

Now labour like this the negroes never will be got to perform again—it is needless to expect it. It is not just to infer, because they will not undertake immoderate labour, they will not perform that which is reasonable. In this case I have just mentioned, when I remonstrated with the book-keeper, who was superintending the labour of the negroes, I was told that they preferred having a long spell, and being done with it. My own opinion was, that no man would prefer thirty-eight hours of continuous labour, who could obtain any reasonable time of intermission. I was told, some of the others who kept spell were for a shorter period: these were the coopers and carpenters; they had been only kept up all night, but at sunrise were again expected to be at their ordinary em-

poyments. But then, it will be said, this extra labour is only exacted in crop time, or while the mill is about; but it so happens, that the mill is about nine months out of the twelve on many plantations. In the preceding instances, the proprietor knew nothing of the harassing service exacted from his apprentices. The aim and end of all my observations and animadversions on this system, is to induce the proprietors to abandon the present mode of managing their estates; to substitute wages for supplies; to trust to free labour only for the cultivation of their estates; to make tenants of their labourers; and to allot small farms to the more independent and well-conducted persons of the coloured and of the negro population. Under any circumstances, the cultivation of sugar in all probability will decrease; but with the changes proposed, and a firm but conciliating system of policy on the part of the government and its subordinate agents, I entertain sanguine expectations of the revival of prosperity in this colony; and even as things are, with only the hope of these changes for preserving the actual tranquillity of the country, the value of property since this day twelve-month, (the brief period of my experience,) I would say, has been enhanced nearly in a two-fold measure. My opinion is, that the negroes are qualified for complete and immediate freedom;

and the attempt to keep them from it, for the term proposed by the new law, I greatly fear will lead to occurrences which no one can contemplate with unconcern.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.



## LETTER XXXV.

WORKING OF THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM  
IN JAMAICA.

---

To MONS. JULIEN.

Kingston, Nov. 6, 1834.

My dear Sir,

The failure of the apprenticeship system would be to be regretted on no account more than for the unfavourable inference respecting the real abolition of slavery, that would be unfairly drawn from the unsuccessful operation of this partial measure. The enemies to emancipation would argue that the conduct of the negroes was the cause of its failure, that slaves who could not be half-liberated with success could never be wholly emancipated with safety. Such notions as these, if the apprenticeship system should unfortunately fail in our colonies, would do harm to the cause of liberty in your colonies. My object in now addressing you, is to put you in possession of the progress and prospects of the new system in this colony ; and by pointing out the difficulties it has had to encounter,

I hope to indicate evils which the friends to the abolition of slavery in your country will be induced to avoid in any remedial measure for the slave they may propose or sanction. The old slave-law in our colonies had undergone repeated modifications and improvements; but its ancient savagery could not be considered as effectually softened down till the year 1788. We are told by Mr. Brydges, "The early laws constructed to restrain the unexampled atrocities of the negroes were rigid and inclement: so great was their depravity of nature and deformity of mind, as to give colour to the prevailing belief in a natural inferiority of intellect, so that the colonists considered it to be a crime of no greater moral magnitude to kill a negro than to destroy a monkey, however rare their interest in them as valuable property rendered such a test of conscience." I presume the clergy of your country have written on the subject of slavery, and have also descanted on "the natural depravity" and mental deformity that caused the construction of rigid and inclement laws, and led the civilised white men of your colonies to think no more of killing a negro than of destroying a monkey. I therefore, perhaps, ought to apologise for troubling you with the Rev. Mr. Brydges' pleasing, and, I dare say, very accurate account of the early spirit of colonial jurisprudence. In 1748, an attempt was

made to mitigate the barbarity of the penal code in this colony: hitherto the power was in the hands of the owners of punishing their slaves to the extent of mutilation, and consequently of death; for no limb, I apprehend, could be mutilated without endangering life. When the measure was discussed in the House of Assembly, which proposed putting these capital punishments in the hands of the magistracy, the tables of the house groaned under the weight of petitions and remonstrances against the infraction of the rights and privileges of the planters; and the admirable historian to whose enlightened views I am indebted on many occasions, lays me under a further obligation for the information, that "it is not at all surprising that even this humane relaxation of the nerves of discipline was viewed with such trembling anxiety, or that the meditated indulgence was smothered beneath a pile of petitions, which loaded the table of the legislature."

In 1831 the late slave law was enacted. The condition of the slave was not in any way effectually improved by it. In some things I think he was put in a worse condition than the preceding law had placed him. In both, however, ample pains were taken to remove the barbarous punishment that disgraced former enactments; and in the last, to secure for the negro in courts of law the advantages of legal protection. But when the

crime amounted to a resistance of authority, or tyranny, or insult, or injury to the majesty of a white man, the advantage I speak of was wholly nominal.

In 1512, in consequence of the reiterated complaints of the Dominican missionaries of the cruelties exercised by the Spanish on the Indians, a measure was prepared for the amelioration of their condition, very similar to our late one in the colonies. The Spanish government sent out a number of gentlemen called visitors or intendants, whose office was quite analogous to that of the special magistrates in our islands, to protect the natives from oppression. Without the consent of the intendants, the Indians could not be punished. There was one day in the week set apart for their own use; certain church festivals were also declared holidays for them, and some indulgences were granted to the women. But these regulations, we are informed, proved wholly ineffectual to repress long-established habits of oppression. In all cases of great evil, half measures usually prove entire failures.

The negroes, we are told, were so happy under the old system, that they had no desire to be absolved from slavery, they were so comfortably provided for; so much better fed, clothed, and housed, and so much less severely worked than English labourers, that they would not change conditions



with them. Many gentlemen of the army and navy, who visited the large town, feasted with the hospitable planters, and were carried to their *crack* plantations—who heard of nothing but of negro indolence—and were shown nothing but evidences of the care and kindness lavished on them, could come to no conclusion but that the slaves were the happiest of human beings.

I find, however, some strange evidences of their happy condition in the annals of Jamaica,—certain little out-breakings of unreasonable discontent year after year, from the commencement of slavery to the close of it: and those little ebullitions which eventually took the form of big rebellions, or actual conspiracies, are noticed in the following list:—

1678, rebellion, caused by prolongation of martial law.

1684, rebellion, first serious one.

1686, rebellion, sanguinary, at Clarendon.

1691, rebellion; many white people murdered.

1702, rebellion; eastern districts.

1717, rebellion, repeated attempts, causing great alarm.

1722, rebellion; Musquito Indians introduced to quell it.

1734, rebellion; the negro town Nanny taken.

1736, rebellion, under Cudjoe.

1739, rebellion, under Quaco, in Trelawney.

- 1740, rebellion, speedily subdued.
- 1745, conspiracy to assassinate the whites.
- 1758, rebellion in Trelawney.
- 1760, rebellion, under Tackay ; 60 whites, 400 negroes, killed.
- 1765, rebellion ; Coromantees the insurgents.
- 1766, rebellion in Westmorland.
- 1769, conspiracy discovered in Kingston.
- 1771, conspiracy ; assembly of 300 surprised by the militia.
- 1777, rebellion, followed by thirty executions.
- 1782, rebellion, St. Mary's, under Three-fingered Jack.
- 1795, rebellion ; Trelawney Maroons.
- 1796, rebellion ; Maroon war ; 600 transported.
- 1798, rebellion, under Cuffee ; great destruction of rebels.
- 1803, conspiracy to murder the whites discovered.
- 1807, conspiracy of a very serious character.
- 1807, mutiny of the black troops.
- 1809, conspiracy against the whites in Kingston.
- 1824, insurrection ; Portland, St. George's, and St. Mary's.
- 1832, rebellion ; 200 killed in the field ; about 500 executed.

If the slaves were in a happy and contented condition, they have certainly taken a very extraordi-

nary way of evincing their content. If we may judge of the cost of subduing former rebellions by the expense of the last, the cost of quelling them must have amounted to millions: the expense of putting down the rebellion of 1760 was estimated at £100,000: that of the last rebellion in 1832, including the value of property destroyed, must have exceeded five times that amount. Parliament granted £300,000 as a loan to assist the planters whose plantations had been destroyed by the slaves. The Sectarians obtained £20,000 to indemnify them for the destruction of property occasioned by the whites. The committee of the House of Assembly, on the subject of the late rebellion, in their report estimate the injury done to property at the sum of £1,154,583; to which is to be added, cost of quelling the rebellion £161,596.

The Baptists, on the other hand, estimate the loss occasioned by the demolition of their chapels by the militia and church colonial unions, at £23,250. What the Methodists estimate their loss at, I do not know. Enough is stated to show that the last rebellion occasioned an enormous expense to put it down, and was attended with an enormous sacrifice of property before it was put down. The expense of blood may be a thing of minor importance, but enough was shed for every purpose that bears the name of justice. A vast number of the executions



which took place, were under the forms of martial law ; but was the sanction of the general in command essential to these forms ? and if it were, I would be glad to know how often was it dispensed with ? I have made inquiries respecting the origin and progress of this rebellion in various quarters ; and the information I obtained has been from sources which are of high authority, and may not be in the reach of general inquiry. The substance of that information I shall endeavour to convey to you in the statement of six facts, that I am well persuaded cannot be controverted.

1st—The slaves were rendered discontented by the abstraction of a portion of their customary holidays, both at Whitsuntide and Christmas. They were further goaded to desperation by the open and avowed determination of the planters to resist every measure for the emancipation of the negroes, gradual or immediate : to counteract which measures, then supposed to be in contemplation, public meetings were called over the country, at which language of the most intemperate kind was employed, some weeks previous to the Christmas holidays.

2ndly—The negroes mistook the general denunciation of the contemplated measures of amelioration, for the suppression on the part of their owners of measures in actual existence.

3rdly—At the outbreak of the rebellion no steps



were taken, except those of a violent character, to convince the negroes of their error, and to induce them to return to their duty.

4thly—No evidence was procured in the whole course of the rebellion, or pending the proceedings at its cessation, to implicate a single missionary in the guilt of having incited the negroes to sedition or insubordination.

5thly—The number of executions exceeded that of similar punishments in any former insurrections; the proportion of death on the scaffold to casualties in the field, being rather more than two to one.

6thly—The exasperation of the colonists at the contemplated measures of the mother country preceded the rebellion; and insomuch as the negroes found their rights the objects of it, it may be inferred that no rebellion would have taken place, if no violent determination had been expressed to resist the efforts of the British government in favour of the slaves.

In 1834 the British Act for the abolition of slavery was *amended* by the House of Assembly in this colony, and the amended Act came into operation the 1st of August. By it slavery was said to be abolished in Jamaica: a state of apprenticeship was substituted—four years for negroes employed as house-servants; six years for those employed as field-labourers; all children (not

destitute) declared free at once ; all negroes entitled to freedom who had been with owner's consent brought to Great Britain ; negroes entitled to demand a valuation of the unexpired term of their apprenticeship, and on payment of award to be set free ; abolition of field-punishment ; exemption of female apprentices from flogging ; transfer of judicial authority over negroes from local to special magistrates ; power of corporal punishments taken from masters and their agents ; labour limited to forty-five hours a week, except in certain emergencies ; four and a half of the forty-five hours subsequently allotted for the cultivation of the negro's grounds. Master bound to maintain his negroes as heretofore ; no apprentice to be taken off the island, or to be separated from his wife or child in removing him from one plantation to another ; every Saturday to be allotted to the negro ; Sunday markets to be abolished. There are a variety of minor regulations respecting the jurisdiction of the special Justices, the classification of apprentices, and the imposition of fines and punishments for specified infractions of the law. But the grand features of this Act are, that slavery is to be abolished, not nominally, but virtually, in the year 1840 ; that the power of adjudicating between master and apprentice is confined to persons specially appointed, and supposed to be

disinterested Judges; and that the power of inflicting arbitrary punishment is taken away from the overseers. For duly carrying this law into effect, the sum of £20,000,000, as a compensation for the ultimate loss of slave labour, was awarded by the British Parliament to the planters; but the difficulties attending the adjustment of complicated interests and contending claims has hitherto delayed the payment of it.

Every preparation that it was possible for the Governor to make for the due administration of the new law was timely made. Previously to August a plain intelligible address to the negro population was put forth.

The exertions of the Governor were well seconded by his secretary, Lieut.-Col. Doyle. While he remained in the island, every species of tyranny and oppression found in him a most determined and unflinching foe. But there was one individual whose whole time and attention were given up to the new system, and whose earnest support of its remedial character was distinguished by a fearless advocacy of the negroes' rights,—that individual was the Attorney-General.

The difficulties of the Marquis of Sligo's position were very great;—he had to deal with an intractable set of people; he had to superintend an anomaly in the form of a legislative enactment, such as the Amended Abolition measure proved,



in which hardly a single clause is to be found which is not in contravention of some other. From this difficulty, the discrepancy in some of the proclamations respecting the time of labour arose. One clause in the Act says, the negro shall labour forty-five hours a week ; another, forty and a half. The intention of the Act in the alteration was to give the negro four hours and a half every Friday for the cultivation of his grounds. The Governor's proclamation announced this indulgence to the apprentices. In the mean time the lawyers of Jamaica call for the strict construction of the words of the clause ; and the words of the colonial Act, in aid of the Abolition Bill, certainly are so admirably vaguely expressed, that the spirit of the law, and the letter of it, may be very differently construed.

The Governor was compelled to retrace his steps : the negroes were not to be persuaded but that their owners had illegally deprived them of one of the most important of their privileges.

*The following is the first proclamation of his Excellency, the Governor, to the Negroes, which was read on every estate by a Magistrate to the apprentices :—*

“ MY FRIENDS,

“ Our good King, who was himself in Jamaica a long time ago, still thinks and talks a great deal of this island. He has sent me out here to take care of



you, and to protect your rights; but he has also ordered me to see justice done to your owners, and to punish those who do wrong. Take my advice, for I am your friend—be sober, honest, and work well when you become apprentices, for should you behave ill and refuse to work because you are no longer slaves, you will assuredly render yourselves liable to punishment.

“The people of England are your friends and fellow-subjects—they have shown themselves such by passing a Bill to make you all free. Your masters are also your friends: they have proved their kind feeling towards you all by passing in the House of Assembly the same Bill. The way to prove that you are deserving of all this goodness, is by labouring diligently during your apprenticeship.

“You will, on the first of August next, no longer be slaves, but from that day you will be Apprenticed to your former owners for a few years, in order to fit you all for freedom. It will therefore depend entirely upon your own conduct whether your Apprenticeship be short or long; for should you run away, you will be brought back by the Maroons and police, and have to remain in Apprenticeship longer than those who behave well. You will only be required to work four days and a half in each week; the remaining day and a half in each week will be your own time, and you may employ it for your own benefit. Bear in mind that every one is obliged to work—some work with their hands, others with their heads, but no one can live and be considered respectable without some employment. Your lot is to work with your hands: I pray you therefore, do your part faithfully, for if you

neglect your duty, you will be brought before the Magistrates whom the King has sent out to watch you, and they must act fairly and do justice to all by punishing those who are badly disposed. Do not listen to the advice of bad people; for should any of you refuse to do what the law requires of you, you will bitterly repent it; when, at the end of the appointed time all your fellow-labourers are released from Apprenticeship, you will find yourselves condemned to hard labour in the workhouse for a lengthened period, as a punishment for your disobedience.

"If you follow my advice, and conduct yourselves well, nothing can prevent your being your own masters, and to labour only for yourselves, and your wives, and your children, at the end of four or six years, according to your respective classes.

"I have not time to go about to all the properties in the island and to tell you this myself—I have therefore ordered this letter of advice to be printed, and ordered it to be read to you all, that you may not be deceived and bring yourselves into trouble by bad advice or mistaken notions.

"I trust you will all be obedient and diligent subjects to our good King, so that he may never have cause to be sorry for all the good he has done for you.

"Your friend and well-wisher,

"SLIGO,

"Governor of Jamaica."

The next proclamation was issued after the Act came into operation. It will be perceived that the forty hours and a half of labor are distributed

over the whole five days, instead of being limited to four and a half days,—an arrangement which a defect in the law was the occasion of, and which produced discontent short only of total insubordination.

“ *To the newly-made Apprentices of Jamaica.*

“ The 1st of August has passed over, and you are no longer slaves. You have been raised, by the generosity and humanity of the British nation, and of those who had power over you, from a state of Slavery to that of Apprenticeship. On yourselves, alone, it now depends, under the blessing of Divine Providence, whether you pass a happy and short period of Apprenticeship, and then become entire masters of your own time, or whether you are continued, in consequence of your own misconduct, some time longer without that great blessing. If you misbehave, you will see your friends who are around you, and who have conducted themselves faithfully and well, their own masters, and working for the benefit of their own families, while you will still be Apprentices, and forced, by the law, to work for your master's advantage. I am sure that you will not be so foolish as to postpone, by your own conduct, the enjoyment of perfect freedom.

“ You, who are what is called *Non-predial Apprentices*, that is, house-servants and such others as will be pointed out by the Special Magistrates, will cease to be Apprentices in *four years' time—that is, on the 1st of August, 1838*, unless, by your own misconduct, you delay it longer. You will be released from your Apprenticeships two years sooner than the predial, or plantation Apprentices ; but, in return for this advan-



tage, you must, while you are Apprentices, give your master the *whole of your time*, just as any hired servant does. If you absent yourselves from his service, though your master cannot punish you now himself, as he was empowered to do when you were slaves, you will be liable to be punished by the order of a Special Magistrate. I advise you, therefore, to pay the most diligent attention to your duties; serve your masters with cheerfulness, and with the gratitude which they deserve. By doing so, you will, in a few short years, enjoy every privilege which other persons in this island, being British subjects, possess. You who are *Predial Apprentices*, or those employed on the estates in the cultivation of the soil, or the manufacture of its produce, have six years to serve; but then you have the great advantage of having but a small portion of your time to give to your masters. Your master cannot claim more than forty and a half hours of your time in each week, except in two cases; but then he has a right to divide this forty and an half hours in such reasonable manner as he pleases, between the first Friday of the week, beginning with Monday; so, however, that he does not compel you to work more than nine hours in each day, except in cases of hurricane, tempest, earthquake, flood, fire, or other misfortune the act of God.

“The two occasions on which your master can require more than forty and a half hours in each week, are, first:—in cases of hurricane, tempest, earthquake, flood, fire, or other misfortune the act of God, when he may employ you during the emergency. Second: at such period of the year as your master may deem it necessary for the cultivation of the estate or plantation. The gathering in of the crop, or its manufac-



ture, he may call on you to work the four and a half hours additional per week; but then he must repay you that time at a convenient period of the year, and not at the rate of more than three days together at one time.

"I recommend to your masters to settle, that you should work eight hours a-day each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and eight and a half hours each Friday. The Saturday and Sunday in all cases, you will have to yourselves, besides all the hours of rest which you get each day.—There are one hundred and sixty-eight hours in each week, out of which, you will have to give your masters only forty and a half hours, and have one hundred and twenty-seven hours and a half at your own disposal. Your master must give you clothes, provision-grounds, and medical attendance, if you are sick. I hope that you will give him cheerfully and willingly the very small portion of your time which he is entitled to.

"It is provided by the law, that you, who are *predial unattached, or jobbers*, shall still continue to work in the same manner, namely, as jobbers; but you are entitled to the same privileges as those who are settled on an estate, in point of hours of labour, and to the same supplies of clothing and medicines, besides sufficient provision-ground or provisions.

"Neither your master, your overseer, your book-keeper, your driver, nor any other person, can strike you or put you into the stocks, nor can you be punished at all except by the order of a Special Magistrate. If any person, without such authority, shall raise an hand to you, or put you into the stocks, he will be liable to be severely punished himself. If you behave badly, your master, or any special con-

stable, may put you into a cell or place of confinement, but not for more than twenty-four hours; and if a Special Magistrate shall not have visited such estate before those twenty-four hours shall have expired, he must release you, but he must bring forward his complaint against you, the first time that a magistrate does visit the property; thus, though you may be released, you will still be liable to be punished for any misconduct; and your master also will be liable to be punished if he shall have improperly confined you.

"I am your sincere well-wisher; I have been sent out by your King, to see that justice is done to all parties: when you are in the right, you will be protected. Whoever is in the wrong will be punished. I advise you, as the best way to insure your happiness, to make your masters your first friends: by following their advice, you will be most likely to act as you ought. Should you, however, be oppressed by any one, go at once to a Special Magistrate, and he will redress any wrong you may have sustained.

"Before I conclude, I wish to say one word to such of you as have been selected by your masters to be plantation constables; to have been chosen by them, on this occasion, is strong proof of the good opinion they entertain of you: I hope that you will not betray their confidence, but will, by your zealous and honest conduct, show that you are worthy of the distinction which you have received. In after life, the character you will then have acquired, will, most probably, be of the greatest benefit to you.

"I am, your sincere Friend,

"SLIGO,

"Governor of Jamaica."

I do not know of any act, in the course of the administration of the present Governor, more honourable to his humanity, and more creditable to his sagacity, than a measure that emanated wholly from his own feelings of benevolence, as well as from the suggestions of a liberal and enlightened policy. I allude to the proclamation addressed to the runaway slaves, promising his Majesty's gracious pardon to all such fugitives as would surrender themselves to any of the Special Magistrates on the 1st of August.

Every difficulty that was possible to throw in the way of that humane and most politic measure was given to it. The Governor's power to issue such a proclamation was questioned by some; the prerogative of his Majesty, in a matter which related to a crime committed before August, and for which the slave was only amenable to his master, was called in question by others. This opposition, however, was not shared by the affluent and intelligent part of the proprietors.

The Governor was heedless of it; and the result of the proclamation was, that hundreds of fugitive slaves flocked in to surrender themselves; slaves who had been five, ten, twenty—nay, five-and-twenty years away from their masters, delivered themselves up on the 1st of August. But, I am sorry to say, some of these fugitives, who misunderstood the terms of the proclamation, and had



gone direct to their owners, instead of coming to the Special Justice, had advantage taken of their ignorance, and also of the privilege of the cart-whip, for a few hours longer (for these cases occurred only a day or two at most, before the 1st of August) to exercise on them the last stretch of authority it would ever be in their power to resort to. One of these cases came under my own knowledge.

A runaway, who had been away from his master, a proprietor in St. Andrew's, for many years, surrendered himself to me. Two days previous to the 1st of August, I gave the man a pass specifying his having delivered himself up, and directed him to call on me for the necessary certificate. The man requested not to be sent to the workhouse for the ensuing two days, but to be allowed to return at once to his master. I cautioned him of the consequences that might result to him, but return he would to his master; and, notwithstanding his pass, he was flogged severely on the very eve of that day when it would not be in the power of that master to dare to lift a lash to his lowest menial. I received a letter from a gentleman of colour, one of the Common Councilmen of Kingston, calling for my interference for a similar outrage, but the *law* was not violated; the white man had his "sacred rights" till the close of that day which ushered in the memorable 1st of



August. The following is the proclamation in question :—

*“ To all runaway slaves throughout the island of Jamaica.*

“ Whereas it has been represented to me, that several slaves having run away are now absent from their owners, and are secreted in different parts of this island, to the great detriment of the community ; and it appearing to me expedient to break up all such unlawful associations, I have therefore thought fit to issue this my proclamation, promising and assuring his Majesty’s most gracious pardon to any runaway slave who shall have been guilty of no other offence against the laws, except leaving his or her master or mistress’s service :—Provided, nevertheless, that such slave shall surrender him or herself between the hours of sun-rise and sun-set, on the first day of August next, to any one of the Special Justices, appointed by his Majesty, for the settlement of disputes between Masters and Apprentices, subsequent to the 31st day of July ; and such Special Justice is hereby authorised and required to grant to each slave, so surrendering, a certificate of his Majesty’s most gracious pardon, according to this my proclamation, so far as his or her absconding from his or her owner is concerned. Provided always, that such individual shall return, after having received such certificate, to his or her master or mistress, and quietly submit, and obey all lawful commands, and pay due attention to his or her duties as Apprentices, otherwise such certificate to be null and void.

All runaway slaves are hereby warned and informed,

that this is the last opportunity which can be afforded them of coming in upon a general amnesty; and that all such as do not take advantage of the same will hereafter be dealt with according to law.

"I do, therefore, seriously call upon all such slaves, and admonish and advise them, to avail themselves of this opportunity of the extension of his Majesty's royal clemency towards them, and thereby to secure to themselves the advantages which the 1st of August will give to the remainder of the slave-population of this island.

"I do hereby, moreover, recommend to all slave-owners, managers, and others, not to punish or bring to trial any of their slaves who shall or may return to their service on any day previous to the said 1st of August next, and that they make known their intention of so doing, in the most public manner, to the slaves on their several estates and properties.

"Given under my hand and seal at Saint Jago de la Vega, the 14th day of July, annoque Domini, 1834.

"SLIGO."

"By His Excellency's command,

"C. J. DOYLE."

The amendments made here in the English Act rendered it *unworkable*: the English Act was complicated enough, and rather loosely worded for practical purposes; but the amended Act made confusion of the whole, and imposed difficulties on the discharge of the duties of the

special justices which the British government could never contemplate, for the difficulties were not to be overcome by human strength.\* One clause made it incumbent on the special justice to visit every property in his district having forty negroes on it, once a fortnight,—an occupation which gave many of them a line of country

\* The duties of the special magistrates were rendered by the amended Act of so arduous a description, that few, for any length of time, could have the physical power to continue them. A few days before his death, Mr. Everard told me he frequently fell asleep in his house from sheer fatigue. This gentleman died on the 25th of August. He was nearly connected with one of the oldest and most respectable families of Ireland, the Talbots of Malahide. He had been for many years in the navy, and for some time was in command of a frigate on the East Indian station. Those who were even slightly acquainted with this amiable and high-minded gentleman could not fail to esteem him; those who knew him so intimately as I did could not fail to love him; and those in a far country, who were linked to him by still dearer ties than those of friendship, will long have to deplore his loss.

In all, during the year I have been in this island, four of the special magistrates sent out from England have died—Mr. Musgrave, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Everard, and Mr. Jerdan; four others of that number have resigned—Captain Mason, Mr. Hill, Captain Deane, and myself. Three more, I understand, since my departure have likewise thrown up their appointments. Of those who remain, there are gentlemen who deserve not a little credit for the honest, manly, and uniform protection they have afforded the apprenticed negroes.



of thirty miles extent, to be scoured in every direction, in daily pursuit of litigation. This too in a climate where constant fatigue and long exposure to the influence of a broiling sun are generally pretty certain in their effects; causes which proved fatal to four of the gentlemen already who have been sent out from the mother country, and which two others have fled from the operation of, and returned back to England.

The first act of the proprietors after the first of August was to take away all those allowances and customary gratuities from the negroes which were not literally specified in the new law. The negroes became discontented: they had reason to be so; the sum of human happiness is made up of a great many small items of enjoyment. The negro's comforts were made up of a large number of small gratuities which the old slave-law did not particularise, but prescribed generally by the name of "customary allowances." The Attorney-General was appealed to by the special justices from all parts of the country for his opinion as to the legality of discontinuing these allowances. He decided that the negroes were entitled to them. Mr. Batty, a distinguished colonial lawyer, who has taken an active part in framing new Abolition Acts to amend the original one, immediately put forth an opposite opinion; and the result was, that



the old allowances were very generally discontinued.\*

You will probably inquire on what grounds Mr. Batty founded his opinion, and under what circumstances the Attorney-General was subsequently called to invoke the spirit of the Abolition Act to prevent the total defeat of its remedial character? Perhaps you will take the trouble to place the opinions of the two legal authorities I have mentioned in juxtaposition; and when you have looked on this picture of the law, and on that of the quibble in its letter, you will be able to decide on both their merits.

*Attorney-General's opinion.*

"The Slavery Abolition is a remedial Act, and to be construed liberally in order to effectuate the benevolent intentions of the Legislature. The slaves now Apprentices are not to be placed in a worse condition than they heretofore were: their allowances some of them were by custom, but so too was Slavery; for it never at any time had any support save from custom, which when universal, as it was in Jamaica, is law. Slavery is and was, however, contrary to common law; and as it invoked the aid of custom as making it valid, so I conceive may the Apprentices invoke custom in the support of their usual allowances, even whilst they are

\* The quantity of herrings exported this year from Great Britain to Jamaica is considerably less than it has been for a great many years.

in the intermediate state of Apprentices. This refers to the non-working in the field women who have more than six children living, which, besides, is sustained by the Apprenticeship law, it declaring Apprentices shall have the usual allowances. This refers to the case of suckling infants, for which the Slaves were allowed heretofore time out of the time heretofore devoted to labour; and further, in all these cases, I say universal custom is *law*. As to by-paths, they must be permitted; no constable's oath either was intended to or could control the law. By-paths long time used cannot be stopped up. This was decided in England in a celebrated case in which the highest personages in the realm were parties. I have also to state that the law never intended to prevent persons repairing to estates, who had just cause so to do, though they did not belong to the estate. I conceive that an Apprentice's Wife has as good right (such having been the custom) to remain with her husband on the estate, as the overseer himself has: his grounds for the time are, as it were, his, as truly as those of a cottier in the mother country are his, save that he cannot use them for any purpose than his immediate purposes of support, maintenance, &c.

(Signed) "D. O'REILY."

This opinion was lithographed; and in the copies of it that were distributed, there were some verbal inaccuracies, which created a great deal of absurd controversy about that part respecting slavery deriving its support from custom: the original opinion at least, as I heard it from the Attorney-

General's own lips, was, that "slavery had no other origin than in custom;" an opinion which is very unpalatable to the colonists, but which, nevertheless, the Attorney-General held in common with Lord Stowell, as will be perceived from the first paragraph in his Lordship's decision respecting the negro woman Grace, and from his entire treatment of the subject of slavery as a custom that was not to be abolished, till it was proved to be a bad one.

The following case was submitted to Mr. Batty for his opinion, by the planters, on the subject of the allowances.

#### CASE.

It has been the custom, for a number of years past, in the parish of Trelawney, as well as most other parishes in this island, to give the negroes upon the estates a weekly allowance of herrings and salt codfish, also oatmeal, flour, sugar, rum, &c., and sundry articles of clothing at crop-over and Christmas, as a reward for good conduct; and to women with six children a weekly or daily allowance (according to their respective cases) of rice, sugar, &c.

It is submitted, that these allowances were never compulsory on the master by the slave-law or otherwise, (except as to the clothing,) but have been granted to the negroes merely as indulgences, and always considered as such by them; for the power of withholding these allowances has always been exercised by the master on occasions of misbehaviour or neglect of duty on the part of the negroes.

The above-mentioned indulgences have been granted only upon some properties; upon others the allowance of salt-fish, at crop-over, has been stopped for some years past, and given only at Christmas; upon others it has been withheld altogether; and upon some properties they have never been given at all.

From the abridgment of the time of labour of the apprentices under the new system, and from other causes, it may be anticipated that the emolument to the proprietors of estates will even be less than it has of late been, consequently the indulgences or allowances above alluded to may of necessity be curtailed, or, perhaps, altogether withdrawn, if there is no law or obligation to the contrary to compel the owners to continue them.

Under the new law, it is not clearly understood whether apprentices employed on estates in domestic occupations, such as cooking, washing, or cleaning out-houses, &c., are to be considered prædials attached, or non-prædials; the females have their grounds and cultivate their own provisions, and may be said occasionally to assist in the manufacture of produce. Youths, when they arrive at the age of fourteen or fifteen, are sent from the house to learn trades or field-cultivation; and females of weak constitutions are frequently relieved for a time from field-labour, and employed as domestics. The cultivation and manufacture of produce cannot, in fact, be carried on, unless some of the labourers are employed to cook, wash, and perform other domestic offices.

You are requested to advise generally, whether, under the provisions of the Abolition Bill, the custom of occasionally or generally having granted the indul-



gences or allowances above-mentioned, has now become law, and if the apprentices are at present entitled, as a matter of right, to them; and whether it is now obligatory on the masters to grant their apprentices such allowances or not?

Whether apprentices, employed in domestic occupations, are to be considered as prædials attached, or as non-prædials?

*Mr. Batty's Opinion.*

I am of opinion that, under the Abolition Act, the apprentices are not entitled to the indulgences and allowances above alluded to. The 16th sec. of the Act gives them the same "food, clothing, medicine, medical attendance, and such other maintenance and allowances," as the owner was required to supply a slave by the Act for Government of Slaves, 1 W. 4, c. 25. Now, on referring to this Act, it will be found that the only clauses in that Act on the subject are the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 17th, neither of which specify or require the allowances above-mentioned to be given to the negroes. The 11th provides, that owners, &c., shall inspect the provision-grounds, and where the negro-grounds are unproductive, or there is no land proper for provisions, shall, by some other ways and means, make "good and ample provision for all such slaves as they shall be possessed of, in order that they may be properly maintained and supported, leaving the mode and nature of the support to the discretion of the owner." The 12th clause requires "every owner to provide proper and sufficient clothing, to be approved of by the vestry." The 13th requires an affidavit that the grounds have been in-

spected, and that every negro is "sufficiently provided with grounds," or, "where there are no grounds, with ample provisions," as required by the 11th section. The 17th section compels every owner to provide infirm and disabled negroes "with sufficient clothing and wholesome necessaries of life." The 8th section of the Act, in aid of the Abolition Act, passed 2nd July last, has no clause respecting allowances to the apprentices except the 8th, relative to sick apprentices, who, under it, are to have the same medical care and attention as has heretofore been customary. It is clear, therefore, that by the Slave Act, an owner is not obliged to give any of the above allowances, but merely to provide sufficient grounds fit for the cultivation of provisions. The 11th section of the English Abolition Act, from which our Act is taken, makes this more clear, as it expressly says, in case of prædial apprentices, the owner shall provide them with ground adequate for his or her support, &c.

2nd—This has been an extremely doubtful point, and I fear will continue so, until a further explanatory Act is passed. If the first part of the fourth clause of the English Act and of our Act stood alone, it would be clear, domestics on an estate would be prædials attached, as, although not "usually employed in agriculture or in the manufacture of colonial produce," yet they are *otherwise employed* on lands belonging to their owners. But the proviso at the end creates the difficulty, as it omits the words "or otherwise," and substitutes "habitually" for "usually." Although this proviso of our Act has been repealed, yet it in substance has been re-enacted by the second section of the Act in aid of the Abolition Act, passed the 2nd July last,

which expressly enacts, that no person of twelve years or upwards shall be included in the prædial classes, unless such person shall, for twelve calendar months next, previous to the 28th of August, 1833, have been *habitually* employed in agriculture or the manufacture of produce. Such also appears to be the construction put on the Act by the English government, as appears by Mr. Stanley's letter, of the 20th of February last, to the Governor, communicated by him to the House of Assembly. On the whole, I must state that, in my opinion, a court of law would construe the Act to mean that domestics and tradesmen, unconnected with the manufacture of produce, *during those twelve months*, are to be considered as "non-prædials."

29th August, 1834.

F. BATTY.

Mr. Batty having given this opinion, it was found so consonant to the feelings of the inquirers that no time was lost in acting on it. The customary allowances were discontinued very generally, and the negroes were rendered discontented and became disinclined to labour. That they were discontinued illegally will appear from the following clauses of the British Act.

"11. And be it further enacted, That during the continuance of any such apprenticeship as aforesaid, the person or persons for the time being entitled to the services of every such apprenticed labourer, shall be and is and are hereby required to supply him or her with such food, clothing, lodging, medicine, medical attendance, and such maintenance and allowances as by any law in force in the colony to

which such apprenticed labourer may belong, an owner is required to supply to and for any slave, being of the same age and sex as such apprenticed labourer shall be."

Again, in the 16th clause—

"16. And whereas it will also be necessary for the protection of such apprenticed labourers as aforesaid, that various regulations should be framed and established in the said respective colonies for securing punctuality and method in the supply to them of such food, clothing, lodging, medicines, medical attendance, and such other maintenance *and allowances* as they are herein-before declared entitled to receive."

In the same clause of the Jamaica Act the words are, "and such other allowances as by an act entitled, an Act for the government of slaves, an owner is required to supply," &c.

The Act alluded to is the old slave-law. Now, in the 52nd clause of the old law, where the words "sufficient quantity of good and wholesome provisions" are made use of—shads and herrings are expressly mentioned, although this customary allowance is prescribed for a slave in confinement, namely, one of either daily, with eight pounds of yams or cocoes, or one quart of Indian corn, or three pints of flour.

In the 49th clause of the Jamaica Act, refusal to furnish the apprentice "with sufficiency of provision-ground, or of other means of maintenance



and support where such apprentice hath no provision-ground,—or of any cruelty, injustice, or other wrong, or injury, done to or inflicted upon any apprenticed labourer,” shall be punished with a fine not exceeding five pounds. Is it no wrong or injury to withhold the articles of sustenance which the negro has hitherto received, and does not the withholding of them plainly come within the meaning of this clause?

The next step of Mr. Batty was to bring in an Act nominally to improve, but virtually to repeal, the remedial parts of the abolition measure.

The first clause is to render it almost impossible for any negro to purchase his liberty, which he is entitled to do by the Abolition Act. The charge of theft is one so easily brought, and the habit of petty-pilfering on estates is so general, that the following clause would absolutely amount to a prohibition.

“ *And whereas* apprenticed labourers are entitled, by the said recited Act, to purchase their discharge from apprenticeship, upon payment of the value at which their apprenticeship may be appraised, *Be it enacted*, that, if, before any order shall be made by the justices, or any such appraisement so to be made, as aforesaid, it shall be alleged before the said justices, that such apprenticed labourer purposed to be discharged, hath, at any time, during his or her apprenticeship, been convicted in a due course of law, of any robbery or theft, *in* case such apprenticed

labourer shall be charged before any justice of the peace or any criminal court with having committed any theft or robbery, the said justices shall inquire into the truth of such allegation; and if it shall be made to appear to them by good and sufficient evidence, on oath, that such apprenticed labourer hath, during his or her apprenticeship, been so convicted of any robbery or theft, the said justices shall, and they are hereby required, not to make any order in such appraisement, and thereupon the same and all other proceedings for the discharge of any such apprenticed labourer shall be stayed until the expiration of three years of the term of his or her apprenticeship, from the time of the conviction of such apprenticed labourer of any such theft or robbery; and, if such apprenticed labourer shall be under such charge before such justice or court, such justices shall suspend further proceedings in such appraisement until such apprenticed labourer shall be convicted or acquitted of any such charge; and, if convicted, the aforesaid proceedings shall be stayed for the period last aforesaid."

The next clause would make the price of freedom so exorbitant, that no negro would be able to purchase his liberty.

"*And whereas* it is desirable that one uniform mode of valuation should be in force in this island, *Be it enacted*, that the justices, in fixing their valuation of any apprenticed labourer, shall ascertain, by the examination of witnesses or otherwise, the amount in value of the services of such apprenticed labourer for one year, and after deducting one-fourth therefrom,

to cover all casualties and contingencies, shall multiply the residue at the same ratio, for the remainder of the term to come of his apprenticeship, and the aggregate shall be deemed the value of such apprenticed labourer, or, if the apprenticeship shall be within one year of its expiration, the said justices shall proceed upon the same principle, and fix the value of such apprenticed labourer, in proportion to the time his or her apprenticeship has to run."

Now the value that the planters put on a field-negro is £26 a year; one-fourth deducted would leave £19. 10s., which, multiplied by five, the unexpired term of apprenticeship, would make the valuation of a field-labourer £96. 10s. It is unnecessary to make any comment on the equity of this valuation.

The next clause is in direct violation of the first of the English Act. The object of this clause is to compel the special justice to make apprenticed labourers of the children who are free by law.

"*And whereas* it may happen, that children who have not attained the age of six years on the said 1st day of August, 1834, or that children who, after that day may be born to any female apprenticed labourers, may not be properly supported by their parents, and that no other person may be supposed, voluntarily, to undertake the support of such children, and it is necessary that provision should be made for the maintenance of such children in any such contingency: *Be it therefore enacted*, That if any child, who, on the

said first day of August, 1834, had not completed his or her sixth year, or if any child, to which any female apprenticed labourer may give birth on or after the said first day of August, 1834, shall be brought before any justice of the peace holding special commission, and if it shall be made to appear to the satisfaction of such justice, that any such child is unprovided with an adequate maintenance, and that such child hath not completed his or her age of twelve years, it shall be lawful for such justice, *and he is hereby required*, on behalf of any such child, to execute an indenture of apprenticeship, thereby binding such child as an apprenticed labourer to the person or persons entitled to the services of the mother of such child."

Every negro child under twelve, it is evident, would be brought before the special justice on the plea of destitution, and he would hereby be required to deprive the free child of his liberty. The council fortunately rejected this bill. Mr. Batty immediately introduced another, wholly at variance with the principle of the British Act. The imperial Act declares, in the sixteenth clause, "that it shall not be lawful for any such Governor, Council, and Assembly, or for any such local legislature, or for his Majesty in council, by any such Acts of Assembly, ordinances, or orders in council, as aforesaid, to make or establish any enactment, regulation, provision, rule, or order, which shall be in any wise repugnant or contradictory to this present Act or any part thereof,



but that every such enactment, &c. shall be and is hereby declared to be absolutely null and void, and of no effect." And only two clauses lower down it is declared and enacted that the special justices alone shall exercise jurisdiction in all matters between master and apprentice. The new bill of Mr. Batty transferred the authority of the special justices back to the local magistrates, whom the Governor, in the words of the Act, was "*hereby required*" to appoint wherever their services might be desired. Had it not been for the strenuous opposition of the Chief-Justice and the Attorney-General, this Bill would have passed the Council. It was thrown out, and again introduced with the words "*hereby required*" omitted, but in all other respects in as objectionable a form as it first appeared in, and passed the Council.

Whether it has yet received the sanction of the King, is not known to the public; but if it has, the framer of it has succeeded in defeating the British Act for the Abolition of Slavery.

I have stated that the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was very reluctantly passed by the House of Assembly. In an address in the month of June, 1834, to His Excellency the Marquis of Sligo, the House openly avows its reluctance.

"It affords us satisfaction to learn, that the bill passed last session to give effect to the slavery abolition act of the British parliament, has received

the royal assent, and been declared adequate to establish the right of this island, to participate in the grant of money awarded by England, as a compensation to the owners of slaves; but the house must again frankly declare, that, in giving effect to that Act, in the shape in which it was pressed upon them, they did so against their better judgment, and to avert the still greater danger of opposing it."

To this the Governor very properly replied—

"I observe, with regret, the sentiments you express relative to your own measure of the last session, passed unanimously, by which you took the lead of the other colonies, and have in consequence been the first of them all to receive the notification, that your island has rendered its right to share in the compensation-money indefeasible."

And in reference to another part of their address—

"I do not quite comprehend the meaning of your term 'unaided by the mother country.' The sum of twenty millions just granted by that country, for compensating her colonies on the change of their system, her never-failing replies to the applications made to her in any cases of real emergency, in which no colony has more largely participated than Jamaica, show that the term 'unaided' can hardly be maintained. It is scarcely necessary for me to recall to your recollection, that, within the last three years, you have received three hundred thousand pounds as a loan to individuals who suffered in the late rebellion.—That the parent state took upon herself the whole payment of the troops for the two years subsequent to that re-

bellion; and that, only within these few days, the island has received another loan of two hundred thousand pounds in coin, at a reduced rate of interest, and payable at a protracted period. These facts unquestionably prove that Jamaica has derived her full share of the fostering attention of the mother country."

A little later in the same month, lest the executive should have left his Majesty in ignorance of the disposition of the House towards the new state of things, a long memorial was addressed to the King in Council, which could not possibly leave his Majesty any longer in ignorance of the Assembly's sentiments on the subject of the abolition of slavery. These sentiments were tolerably strongly expressed in the following passage from "The Humble Address and Memorial of the Assembly of Jamaica."

"The Act declared the slaves to be free on a day therein named. It contained numerous details, showing equal ignorance of our institutions, and disregard of our public and private rights; and the compensation it gave was very far below the value of the property it took away. Nevertheless, no time was afforded us for remonstrance, but it was arbitrarily decreed, that, if the legislature of Jamaica did not adopt the Act, with all its errors, hardships, and manifest injustice, the claim of their constituents to a portion of the indemnity should be entirely and irrevocably forfeited. It was enacted by a British Parliament, that, unless we yielded our property by a certain day, and for an inadequate, and, as it has proved, uncertain compen-

sation, that property should be confiscated, our constitution overturned, our laws—laws established by the royal assent—violently abrogated, and our people subjected to the military and hateful government of a conquered country.

“One path only was left open to us to avoid these mischiefs, and, perhaps, a desolating civil war, and we subscribed to the letter of the terms of the British Parliament.

“But had we anticipated that the miserable reward of our submission would be, in the chief part, withheld from us, to enrich the foreign settlements conquered from the enemy, we would have rejected with indignation the unworthy compromise, and incurred all the evils which the authority and anger of the mother country might have inflicted, protesting against her tyranny before the world, and reserving our rights to be vindicated and resumed at some happier moment.”

These expressions of the sentiments of the Members of the Assembly are important: I do not willingly advert to them; I adduce them solely because they serve to show the spirit in which the new order of things was encountered; and it affords a prospect of the opposition which the new law will have to encounter, and, if not resisted with a high hand, to succumb to. The apprenticeship system has not served the purpose it was intended for: it is not in the nature of things to expect a fair trial for it in Jamaica. For many weeks past, the labours of the House of Assembly have been directed to a single object,—to the making out of a



strong case against the apprentices,—to the establishment of the fact that they will not work either for wages or without them.

It is perfectly needless to enter into any inquiry as to the mode adopted of arriving at this conclusion;—it is perfectly unnecessary to inquire whether the property of Jamaica is represented in that House,—whether its privileges are paramount to those of the Imperial Parliament.\* But it may not be altogether idle or irrelevant to demand of that colonial legislature, by what right it assumes to itself a power which the British House of Commons does not pretend to,—of examining witnesses on oath, and of committing a minister of the Gospel to the felon's jail, for refusing to be sworn by it. If the House of Assembly have made out their case, and the negroes cannot be got, under the existing law, to work

\* The House of Assembly consists of forty-five members, each parish sending two members; and the towns of Kingston, Port Royal, and Spanish Town one member additional each. The representative is required, by law, to possess £300 per annum, or personal estate to the amount of £3000. But it has not been found convenient to consider the qualification too curiously. A ten-pound freehold is the qualification of an elector; and the whole body of the electors, with the exception of the coloured classes in the large towns, being planters, or the agents of planters, it is evident what *complexion* is represented in the House of Assembly. In regard to property, as well as population, the representation is most unequal.

either for money or without it, it is a folly for the planters to continue the present system of apprenticeship any longer. Revert to slavery they cannot: but if the negroes have been maligned, and do their duty wherever they are well treated, and afford their own time to their employers wherever they have been adequately remunerated for it, then is it time to do justice to them, and to give them all the encouragement which is due to their good conduct—complete emancipation, and not the name of freedom only.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.



## LETTER XXXVI.

THE WORKING OF THE ABOLITION BILL  
IN JAMAICA.\*

---

To MONS. JULIEN.

Kingston, November 14, 1834.

My dear Sir,

The apprenticeship system might have answered the object it was meant to accomplish, had it met with a fair trial. The difficulties, however, it had to encounter in this island, where I had an opportunity of observing its progress, did not allow of its obtaining that trial.

These difficulties may be referred to six heads.

1st—Non-residence of the great majority of large proprietors on their estates.

2nd—Inability of the majority of resident proprietors to pay wages to negroes for over-time.

3rd—Separate interests of the attorneys who

\* The substance of this letter was laid before the late colonial minister.

manage the estates of the absentees, from those of the owners.

4th—Importunity of merchants at home (to whom two-thirds of the estates are mortgaged) for large returns, while the means of obtaining them with the diminished time of labour must necessarily diminish cultivation.

5th—Jealousy of the local magistrates, whose jurisdiction is superseded by that of the special magistrates.

6th—Irritation of the overseers, whose power over the slaves has been taken away by the new law.

These I consider the chief sources of the difficulties now in the way of a desirable settlement of the question of slavery, and of the opposition which the apprenticeship system is now encountering at the hands of the white population.

The dislike to the apprenticeship, on the part of the negroes, may be referred to three heads.

1st—Incapacity, or at least unwillingness, to comprehend prospective advantages.

2nd—Reluctance to labour without wages.

3rd—Disposition, in some instances, to withhold their own time, and that of their children under six years of age, as a retaliation for past grievances, real or imaginary; or the recent deprivation of their old allowances.

To these causes the indolence that is supposed



to be natural to the negro character, and the sudden cessation of field-punishment, might be added; but I have not done so, because wherever I have seen the negro paid for his extra time by an owner in whom he had no mistrust, that indolence was overcome, and the stimulus of arbitrary punishment was not required. Individual exceptions there may be: I speak of the majority of the apprentices, where the proprietor is able to pay wages, and not disposed to annoy the negroes.

The four first sources of difficulty I do not refer to, because they are too obvious to need any comment. The fifth is one, the mischief of which is more immediately felt in the colonies than any of the others. In the absence of the extensive proprietors, the local magistrates, in a great many instances, are chosen from the body of attorneys, and small, and perhaps embarrassed, proprietors, and political adherents of both in large towns.

The magistrates of Kingston hold their commissions from the corporation, and are independent of the executive, and from the constitution of that body it is far from being desirable that they should be so. The corporation of Kingston is founded on the American model; it is a municipal democracy, totally unfitted for the state of society in Jamaica. The opinions of the Governor, the Chief-Justice, and the Attorney-General,—I am much deceived, if they are not to the extent that its

existence is an evil; and I am pretty sure the respectable inhabitants of Kingston think that the removal of its privileges would be a public benefit. Constituted as the local magistracy is, opposition to the executive must be expected. Many of the country magistrates, nevertheless, so far as humanity is concerned, I am quite sure, might be trusted with the execution of the new law, however adverse they are to its principle, but the great majority of them most certainly not; they feel injured by the appointment of the Special Justices, and therefore their influence is successfully exerted over the press and the House of Assembly, to thwart the government, to oppose the Special Justices, and to vex the negroes.

Overseers and book-keepers are not only adverse to the new system, but interested in defeating it. It has deprived them of authority, and in a few years it will deprive them of bread. Their irritation, no longer to be vented in actual violence, is exhibited on every trivial occasion, in expressions of invective and abuse, which the negroes resent by a sullen spirit of indolence in the field. It cannot be denied, where such treatment is experienced, they do not work as heretofore: it cannot indeed be expected that they should; they consider the curtailment of their allowances more than a counterpoise for the abridgement of the time of labour. Their conduct, under this impression,

may be unreasonable, and in some instances provoking, but firmness is not more requisite than forbearance to remove it. In a few instances at the commencement they went to the extent of a dogged refusal to work at all; but that spirit was of short continuance: in others, they have gone to the length of hooting the magistrates who were brought to coerce them; and on one occasion the trash-house was consumed while a special justice was investigating the complaints of the proprietor. In fact a bad spirit prevails between the apprentice and the owner. The privileges of the one and the prejudices of the other are at war. The special magistracy is interposed between them, and the issue depends on the prudence, independence, and even the numerical force of the latter.

The vexations of the negroes may be thought trivial, but in reality they are not so. Their rights are not sufficiently protected by the new law. It is very true the apprentices cannot be flogged by their masters—their evidence cannot be refused in a court of justice—their time of labour is limited, or at least ought to be limited to nine hours a day—they cannot be sold in the market-place by public sale, nor separated from their families for the payment of jailors' fees—humanity is happily spared these outrages; but in all that respects the mode of administering their

---

supplies, of apportioning their time of labour, of defining the nature and extent of the jurisdiction of the special justices, the matter is so vaguely expressed in the Act as amended here, that loopholes are left for innumerable vexations, which it is not in the power of the special magistrate to prevent or punish. These vexations consist in withholding the customary allowances of salted provisions, rum, and sugar, or, where they are continued, of exacting from the negro such extra labour as the law has allotted for the necessary cultivation of the negro grounds. It is in vain that the Attorney-General has invoked the spirit of the law to secure for the apprentices the continuance of their usual allowances, and those privileges which the old law afforded to the slaves, of exemption from field-labour for those women who had six children living on a property, or the allotment of lighter work for those in the last months of pregnancy, or the abstraction of sufficient time from their masters for the necessary performance of the offices of maternity, which was formerly permitted to the mother in the field. To the negro who looks on the deviation from an established custom as the deprivation of a right, these alterations in the management of a property are of no little moment: the aged and infirm people who formerly attended the working gangs in the capacity of cooks and nurses, are no longer



allowed, or, where they are, their services are paid out of the time of the labourers. The severity of a recent Act constitutes it an act of vagrancy for the apprentice of one property to be found in the negro huts of another, though persons connected by those ties which custom sanctions here are usually to be found on all adjoining estates; while the children under six years of age, whose parents may refuse to apprentice them to their former owners, may be taken before the special justice on the plea of destitution; or, where deterred from that proceeding by the frequency of its failure, the parent may be menaced with the dismissal of those children from the property, which the law does not oblige them to provide for. These vexations are in daily operation: they are opposed by the special magistrates, but cannot be put down; and the result of the attempts to do so, is a spirit of resistance to their authority, a jealousy of their exercise of it which knows no bounds and acknowledges no control.

The following letter, addressed to the editor of the Chronicle, is a tolerably good specimen of the feelings of the colonists towards those who administer the new law. The letter is well known to be written by a member of Assembly—one who is a great writer as well as *speaker*.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

*To the Editor of the Kingston Chronicle.*

August 30th.

" Sir,

" I beg the use of your columns to express my indignation at the base subserviency, or culpable carelessness, which has led our legislators to pass the Supplemental Abolition Act.

" The proceedings in this parish of the Special Magistrates have compelled many sufferers to look into the law for relief and redress, but they are met by the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth clauses of Mr. Alexander Barclay's Act.

" Was it not enough that we surrendered our property at the command of an arbitrary government, having the fear of the bayonet before our eyes, and that our surrender was declared acceptable by our British masters,—we must add to our degradation, by volunteering another leap into a lower depth of wretchedness and contempt?

" Why did our Assembly pass Mr. Barclay's Bill?

" Is there a single clause for the protection of the master? There is scarcely a single clause that does not deprive the cheated planter of some advantage, which remained to him, either by the oversight or the mercy of the British parliament.

" The original law gives the British stipendiary ample authority—authority to grind the planter to dust. It gives him for the time a despotic and unconstitutional authority,—a degree of power that never was and never can be safely and fairly exercised by

man over his fellow. But the original law left a check on the fantastic tricks—the jack-in-office insolence, and consequential extravagances of our thirty tyrants. Our courts were open to us. Although on the judges' bench, which some of these stipendiaries have the presumption and vanity to occupy, they may bluster with more than Old Bailey assurance; and fine, and threaten, and insult men, ten thousand times their superiors in every respect that makes man estimable;—although they might trample on the weak and unprotected lady, and wring his hard-earned salary from the overseer. Yet, when the behest of their brief authority was consummated, the original British act, and the Jamaica copy of that act, left open to the injured and the oppressed, our own courts and our own judges,—and, more and better than all—our own juries. There the triumph of the stipendiary might have been changed for weeping and gnashing of teeth. There he might have been taught the salutary lesson, that when the omnipotence of an earthly government is excited to plunder and destroy—however that omnipotence may protect the mighty wrongdoers—yet, that the wretched, mean, and sordid instrument—the tool without principle and without a blush—the lucre-seeking intruder—is sure to meet the just punishment provided by the law of man, and sanctioned by the law of God.

“ Mr. Barclay however interposed where the saints had left their creatures unprotected—

‘ Barclay rushed in where Stephen fear'd to tread.’

“ He has, by the clauses already quoted, as much as in him lay, decreed the entire impunity of the stipen-

diary magistrates. I do not blame the House of Assembly for this miserable piece of legislation, for the whole Bill smells of Aldermanbury Street: I do not blame them for purposely putting our heads under the feet of the stipendiaries, but I blame them for entrusting any bill to the management and discretion of a member, so little known, of such very moderate talents and endowments, and of such Cimmerian ignorance of agricultural interests as Mr. Alexander Barclay. I am sure, had a single member of ordinary information read the bill, he would not have failed of seeing its absurdities and its mischiefs, of detecting the traps laid for the unwary; and, seeing and detecting them, he must have exposed the measure and its frames to the House, and procured its contemptuous and instant rejection.

“What did Mr. Barclay know of these strangers that he should place them so tenderly under the shelter of a particular Act? What had been their former services, and what services were expected from them in the time to come? None but the most obscure and poorly smitten persons (having the pretensions of gentlemen) would have sought our shores in the acceptance of the odious duty of a Dogberry and an Oliver for the pittance of three hundred pounds a year. Jamaica did not invite them; she required not their assistance to execute her laws. So far indeed, are they from having claims on our forbearance, and for a relaxation of our laws in their special favour, that they are to us a reproach and a dishonour. They are the paid officials of a distant country,—usurping the functions of our local magistracy,—enforcing a detestable foreign policy,—prying



into our domestic affairs,—mulcting or casting into a loathsome jail the most respected amongst us at their pleasure,—converting our wealth into an incumbrance—‘undoing all, as all had never been.’ They are besides the living creation of our cowardice, and, I fear, of our folly and indiscretion ;—they are the proofs of our imbecility, both of purpose and action ; they are the marks of a more grinding and spirit-breaking slavery to the yoke of the stranger, than ever Hindoo groaned under, or Israelite was condemned to.

“ It is to these persons that Mr. Barclay has extended his fostering care. For their sake he has closed our courts to the victim. On their behalf he has broken in upon the theory of the British constitution, which opens the portals of the laws to the lowest of the king’s subjects. Backed by the power of England, these intruders must also be taken under the patronage of Mr. Barclay.”

The opposition to the new law, and generally to the executive, may be doubted, because the line of conduct described is contrary, not only to the public advantage, but to self-interest and common sense. But what advantage can be expected from the constant practice that prevails in the House of Assembly, of vituperating the negroes, and maligning the intentions of the mother country? What good is to arise from the artful attempts made there to defeat the new law, and even to unsettle the compensation which has been awarded, on the terms of carrying the law fairly into effect—at-

tempts which have been regarded as successful efforts of colonial patriotism? Of what advantage can it be to the master to exasperate the apprentice, at a period when the title to his services is held by the feeble tenure of a bond, that will not be in force in six years? Common sense cannot influence the conduct of those who fritter away the four and a half hours that should be given in one amount of time to the negro, and that time the half of Friday, for the purpose the law intended. The law says, the apprentices shall go to market on Saturday; the parsons properly tell them they shall not work their grounds on Sunday. What day, then, have they but that half of Friday which the law intended for their cultivation, and which a quibble in the letter has seized on to deprive them of its advantages? I have had the whole of the negroes of plantations from adjoining parishes before me, demanding what they believed to be their right—their half of Friday to cultivate their grounds, and telling me they would starve if they did not get it; and I have been compelled to tell them they could not have it, and to feel that the law intended that they should. Common sense and humanity, which is its policy, could not suggest or sanction this arrangement; because if the estate gained a temporary advantage of four and a half hours' labour at one time, it was dearly bought at the expense of the good-will of the

labourers, who, in a little while, will have the power of making their own terms with their employers. But economy in the management of plantations has all at once become the order of the day ; but I fear it has been too suddenly adopted to be productive of any good, and I fear it is the pretext for a foolish indulgence in vexatious measures, which may solace the overseer for the loss of *his* authority, or console the agent for the decrease in his emoluments, but which eventually must sacrifice the interests of the owner.

The tranquillity that now exists in Jamaica is of a very precarious sort. Where it appears to prevail most, I have reason to know there is most general dissatisfaction and the greatest danger of disturbance. But what dissatisfaction should prevail when the wrongs of the negro may be redressed by the special justice, and any graver injuries be brought before a higher court of law ? But so far from the amended Act being sufficient for the protection of the negroes, the special magistrates hardly find the power of the executive strong enough to protect themselves.

As to the protection of the higher courts, to glance at their constitution is at once to see they are inadequate for the protection of the negroes. Who are the judges of the quarter-sessions ?—The store-keepers and planters, who possess most political influence to procure recommendations from

the Custos to the Governor. Legal knowledge is no requisite for these appointments; the principle and precedents of common law these mercantile and agricultural judges receive, as the emergency requires, at the hands of the Clerks of the Peace. Two preside at the Grand Court as assistants of the Chief-Justice, and these co-adjutors of the learned Judge have a salary of £700 currency per annum. They preside even in the towns of their own residence, where a case cannot come before them, in which, indirectly or directly, the parties must not be known to them, and wherein their interests are not very frequently concerned. This evil of putting men, ignorant of law, in the highest legal offices, is the greatest impediment to justice I know of in the colonies. The next in degree is that of selecting men for juries, whose animosities and prejudices, with regard to the negroes, utterly disqualify them for the duties of impartial jurymen. Yet the juries in the Quarter Sessions Court, and very often the Grand Court, are composed of bushas, while the unfortunate prisoners are negroes; and the very names cannot come in contact without suggesting ideas of mutual animosity. After a year's observation of these evils in Jamaica, my opinion is that they are increasing much of late; and that the difficulty of obtaining justice from such courts for the negro is



not diminished. The grand juries are very difficultly now prevailed on to find a bill against a white man; the petty juries, in few instances indeed where they can possibly avoid it, will convict one.

Since August various outrages have been committed by white people on negroes. One planter has been indicted for shooting at an old woman, and, after wounding her severely, discharging the second barrel at her, but fortunately without effect. The grand jury ignored the bill.

Another gentleman was indicted at the October Court, for an outrage on a sick negro woman. The grand jury ignored the bill.

Another planter was indicted for the murder of his negro, by shooting him, and was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

Another gentleman, an overseer, was committed to jail a few weeks ago for the murder of a boy, by shooting at a number of negroes assembled in a hut, in the act of singing hymns. He has not been yet tried, but from the exertions making for him I have no expectation he will be convicted.

Another gentleman was tried in October, for causing one of his negroes to be severely torn by dogs, for going without permission to bury his wife, who had been dead three days, and had been refused sufficient time to prepare her coffin. The

strenuous exertions of the Chief-Justice obtained a conviction : he was fined £100.

But in the majority of cases convictions are not to be expected. Such cases are not given on newspaper authority. I have taken them from the sworn informations. Is this a state of things to go on ? Is it a state of things to be remedied under the present system ? In my opinion it is not.

In this condition will the negroes be better fitted for freedom in six years than they are now ? It is greatly to be feared, that, in that interval of restricted freedom, the relations between the master and the apprentice will be sundered wider every day, and more heart-burnings will accrue between master and apprentice than would probably have arisen between the owner and the slave. These are no exaggerated sentiments : I am well aware that exaggeration only diminishes the effect of truth. Will the proprietor be in a better condition to pay wages to his labourer at the expiration of that time, than he will be at the end of another year, when some part of the compensation-money may be at his disposal ? The probability is he will not.

Is there a prospect of education becoming more diffused during the apprenticeship, or of the present system pursued by the dissenting clergy becoming more calculated to elevate the intellectual character of the negro ? or of the instruction

afforded by the clergy of the Established Church becoming more available to the negroes, and better suited to their spiritual wants? The negroes, I am convinced, will receive with distrust every effort to cultivate their minds, till effectual means are taken to improve their civil condition. No one, I am persuaded, who has not witnessed the efforts made to counteract the remedial character of the late measure, can imagine how little the condition of the negro has been improved by it. But there is another question, and one of no little moment at this time—

Is the dissatisfaction of the negroes likely to proceed to serious disturbance, or is advantage possible to be taken of their dissatisfaction to augment the clamour for martial law, which that part of the press which disgraces the island, and the insensate part of the young men of the community are now crying out for with so much vehemence? It is most earnestly to be hoped that recourse to such a measure may not take place.

But were partial disturbances to arise, and the clamour I speak of, which his Excellency the Governor has hitherto had the humanity and firmness to resist, were urged with still greater violence, how long might it take to goad the feelings of secret discontent to the phrenzy of some overt outrage, whose violence might afford a pretext for a lawless retribution, under the name or forms of

martial law ? When it is recollected how the militia is constituted—its commanding-officers the leading members of the colonial unions ; its petty officers the bushas and young planters ; the privates, the book-keepers and white servants of the estate, it is easy to conceive to what an extent the martial enthusiasm of these military aspirants is likely to lead them. — One of the colonels of militia has been very lately dismissed from his regiment, a Colonel Senior of St. Anne's, whose attachment to the present measure is not very remarkable. The following are copies of the correspondence between Colonel Senior and the Governor :—

*Colonel Senior of St. Anne's to Lord Sligo on his dismissal from the Colonelcy of the St. Anne's regiment.*

“ My Lord,—As a British subject, I claim that justice from you, which I have a right to look to you for as the legal representative of your Sovereign, and which, as Governor of Jamaica, you are bound by your oath to administer to every man, whether he be *white* or *black*. Though your Lordship may see no reason for granting me a Court-Martial, yet having committed no military offence, it is my duty to myself to demand it, and your refusal will only prove that the ostensible motive for depriving me of the command of a regiment is not the true one. An author says—‘ On every consideration of a Court of Inquiry conducted with fairness and impartiality, it may be regarded as



a mark of royal lenity rather than of severity.' Now, I maintain that the Court of Inquiry, by order of your Lordship, was not conducted with fairness or impartiality; there was nothing like royal lenity, for I received no notice of any charges to be preferred against me—I had no order to appear, and I was not allowed to bring forward a single witness: persons of the most infamous character and lowest grade in society were allowed to give evidence not on oath, against me, on matters of which they could have no knowledge whatever, and without the slightest chance of contradiction, for the doors were closed, and every witness could safely say whatever he wished. If I am denied this act of justice, my Lord, I will appeal to the public, both here and in England—and, I trust, be able to show very clearly that I have not committed any military offence, or any act which would call upon your Lordship for such a vindictive mark of feeling; and that you have permitted yourself to be made the tool of some malicious and revengeful villain, who dared not openly assail me."

"The King's House, October 10, 1834.

"Sir,—I am directed by his Excellency the Captain-General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, and to say that of course any appeal to the public is quite within your own discretion. He further desires me to say, that in the exercise of his Majesty's prerogative vested in his hands, he thought fit to dispense with your services as Colonel of the Saint Anne's Western Regiment. Being, however, anxious to do his duty in the manner least painful to your feelings, he gave you the option of resignation,

stating his intention of superseding you by a General Order, if you did not adopt the other alternative.

" Your resignation having in reply been tendered, and accepted, the matter terminated as far as his Excellency is concerned.

" I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

" W. G. NUNES, Sec."

" G. W. Senior, Esq."

It is fearful even to contemplate a repetition of the scenes of the last rebellion. I can conceive no calamity so great as the necessity for martial law in Jamaica, no security so dearly purchased as its protection, no outrages so difficultly to be repressed as its excesses. I have expressed my opinions to you on this subject, with a strong feeling of the insufficiency of the present system of apprenticeship for any useful purpose, either of advantage to the planter, as a prolongation of the term of unpaid labour, or of benefit to the apprentice as a probationary trial. I am fully persuaded, that the system of apprenticeship cannot last the half of its appointed term, and as fully am I convinced for neither party is it desirable that it should. In a word, in the present system there is no security for the negro's rights ; there is no prospect of an improvement for his intellectual condition, and no probability of an adequate amount of remunerative labour for the proprietor.

I look forward to complete emancipation for the

regeneration of this colony, and for the revival of the prosperity of its settlers. I do not, indeed, expect that large fortunes will be suddenly acquired as heretofore by the culture of that staple which has proved so precarious, even in its most prosperous periods of cultivation, producing for a few years inordinate advantages, and finally encumbering the property with irretrievable expenses. But I entertain the opinion that Lord Belmore expressed,—that the vast resources of Jamaica would never be developed till slavery was extinct. And I take this latest opportunity of my residence in this island to do justice to the negro character, and to proclaim the result of my experience and observation of it, both in this hemisphere and in the other quarters of the globe—that the negro is not inferior to the white man in any advantages of mental conformation, that capacitates the latter for the pursuit of happiness or the prosecution of industry, in whatever way is most consonant to his wishes. As to the qualities of the negro, I am inclined to think his natural disposition may speak unbosomed in the presence of the proudest of his oppressors. I am not fool enough to think that the vices of slavery are not to be found in this colony, and that duplicity and abject servitude are not every where to be met where slavery exists, as cause and effect follow one another in the ordi-

nary course of things. But the more I have seen of the negroes in this island, and the more closely I have observed their conduct, the more reason I have to think that they are naturally a good-humoured, easily contented, kind-hearted race, amply disposed to appreciate kind treatment and to be grateful for it. Of their disposition to appreciate benefits, even in the trifling way I have endeavoured to be serviceable to them, by protecting them from injustice to the best of my poor ability—I have had proofs enough of their grateful feelings towards me. One poor fellow of the name of Cochrane came to me the other day to take leave of me: I had never rendered him the slightest service, but I had been civil to him, and he had been in the habit of coming to my house. He took leave of me with tears in his eyes: Dr. Chamberlaine was present:—he took me aside and put a paper into my hand, which he said was a small present, which he hoped I would accept, to think of him when I was gone. I opened the paper, and, to my surprise, I found it contained three Spanish doubloons. I cannot describe what I felt in assuring the poor negro I did not need his gold to remember him and his race with kindly feelings. It was with difficulty I could prevail on him to take it back. He turned away abruptly from me, and that night I had a kid sent to me,



which he sent me word he hoped might be of use to me on my voyage home.

Two days ago, an old man, whom I had never seen before, entered the gate as I was going out, and addressed me with the Mussulman salaam in Arabic; he was a native African, and he presented a pair of ducks, which, he said, he brought for me a long way, to make part of my sea-stock. He seemed to think I was a friend to his countrymen, and he wished to prove to me that he was grateful for it. I accepted the old man's ducks, with more gratification than, perhaps, a European minister ever felt at receiving a diamond snuff-box from the Sultan. In short, for the last week, I have been receiving more presents of fruit and poultry than I know what to do with. Well, I suppose this is all "Congo saw," as every act of negro kindness is interpreted by their detractors. The present of the three doubloons, equal to £10 sterling, was only a negro Gallic compliment, which it was known would not be accepted. I can only say, I believe the offer was the spontaneous act of simple-minded honesty; and such was the opinion of the noble-minded individual who was with me at the time. But if gratitude ever can be burthensome, I may truly say I never found grateful feelings more likely to run to that extent, than those of my Timbuctoo friend, Abon Becr. In fact, in every

instance in which I have been able to render any service to a negro, I have found him mindful of it, and far more grateful for it than I could have expected. Those who think that six years of apprenticeship, in a state of modified slavery, are necessary to qualify the negro for liberty, I would recommend to turn their eyes, at this moment, to the condition of Antigua, where the recent slaves have all at once been emancipated ; and when they compare the present happy condition of that island with the actual wretched state of this colony, they will be constrained to acknowledge that the anomalous system, which exists in the latter, is one that ought not to continue. Of things personal to myself, I will not trouble you with many details. I entertained, from the first day the new law came into operation, the opinion that the emancipated negroes were to be considered as British subjects ; and, in all judicial proceedings, were to be brought before the magistrate by the same forms, and the investigation of complaints against them conducted in the same manner, as any other British subject's would be brought before a magistrate at home, and the case decided on the same description of unbiassed evidence. The members of the corporate body were pleased to think otherwise. I, however, saw nothing in their opinion, or in the violence that continued to accompany it, to cause me to alter mine. One of the great objects of the

new law was to prevent masters from exercising any acts of violence on their negroes. I found the violence, that could not be practised at home, was frequently had recourse to in dragging apprentices before me. I established the custom of requiring owners to apply at the special court, for warrants to take up their apprentices, and refused to listen to any case where coercion was employed by the owner in bringing negroes before me. One of the corporate magistrates had tried this question, on several occasions, with me. In one case, he came to my office, accompanied by one of his friends, an editor of a daily paper, a person of considerable notoriety, as an opposer of the new system. He demonstrated his right of arresting his apprentice on this occasion, by dragging him before me, on a charge of larceny. It must be recollected that Kingston is differently situated, with respect to the administration of the new law, to the country districts. Here there is a special justice, who sits daily from ten to four, and a regular constabulary force; therefore the necessity does not exist of imprisoning the negro at the owner's will, for twelve or twenty-four hours before he is brought to a special magistrate; and if he may be brought without a warrant, he may be dragged, or even beaten, under the pretext of bringing him before the magistrate.

In the case of the local magistrate I have just

spoken of, I had a gentleman before me who had frequently argued the question of a master's privilege who happened to be a magistrate, to bring up his negroes when and how he chose. I had intimated to him what was the practice, that if his apprentice would not instantly attend, and no resistance was attempted nor apprehended, no warrant was required. He went away apparently satisfied, and expressed some regret at what had occurred. But second breakfast was no sooner over, than the same magistrate entered the office, dragging in the same apprentice, and demanding in the loudest tones the investigation of his complaint. He was accompanied by his friend the editor and several of the low Jews of this community. All my efforts to pacify him were of no avail.

I inquired into the nature of the evidence against the negro: it appeared to me there was not a shadow of ground for the charge against him. I therefore dismissed the complaint, because there was no evidence to support it; and if there had been, I did not consider I would have been justified in permitting this gentleman, because he belonged to the corporation, to seize on his negro when and how he thought proper, and bring him by the collar before the magistrate, as he did in the last instance. His violence on the dismissal of the case left me no alternative but to request



him to withdraw, and, on further outrage, to order him to be removed. He defied the police at the peril of the vengeance of the corporation to obey my orders. The police refused to act: I could not blame them; they were the servants of the Mayor and Corporation. The reporter of the paper whose editor was before me, abetting his companion in this brawl, in protecting the authority of my office—a man wholly opposed to my views, but who said he could not stand by and see such indignity offered to any public officer—was dragged by this gentleman out of the office and maltreated by him in the street. The unfortunate result of this poor man's interference was dismissal from his employment; and another special constable, who assisted in suppressing the riot, and tendering his services at the office the next day, was dismissed from the office of City Warden, by the order of the Mayor and some other members of the corporation.\*

\* This man has since, by Lord Aberdeen's orders, been appointed to a good situation in the New Police. The other poor man's case, which is one of still greater hardship, was unfortunately unknown to his Lordship, or I am persuaded something would have been done for him. In the same instructions the Governor was directed to support me, and I have every reason to believe his Excellency was amply disposed to do so; and, in justice to the late Secretary of the Colonies, I must state, that in every thing that came to my knowledge, his Lordship acted fairly and in an honest spirit towards the Abolition measure.

There were two magistrates present on this occasion, Capt. Dillon and Dr. Chamberlaine, both of whose statements of this outrage were taken immediately after it occurred. Had it not been for the strenuous exertions of these gentlemen when the riot commenced in the street, a serious disturbance would have taken place. The office was now closed for several days, by the recommendation of the Governor, as there was protection to be expected for it. The place where I had held my sittings was a ground-floor, that had been a common store, which was hired for the sittings of the Special Magistrate by the Mayor, on the part of the Corporation; as the court-house, where the other magisterial business was transacted, was deemed too dignified a place for the administration of justice under the new law. My first sittings were held in the latter; but one morning I was not a little surprised on going to the court-house, to be informed by a policeman that the Mayor had given orders I was not to sit there any more. This was the only intimation I received of the change of the scene of my duties. The special court was no sooner re-opened, than I found myself placed on the bench beside a gentleman of the name of Pacifico, who had menaced me with actual violence, with tarring and feathering, &c. on the occasion of the former brawl, in support of his friend the Corporation Magistrate. I

inquired his business inside the bar,—it was his pleasure to be there, and he would remain there. I requested him to retire; eventually I insisted on his removal. About ten days after this occurrence, I was assaulted by this man in the broad noon-day in the streets of Kingston.

The following is the abridged statement of the assault committed on me by Mr. Pacifico, addressed to the Secretary, Mr. Nunez, for his Excellency's information:—

“I beg to state, for his Excellency's information, that a violent assault was committed on me this day on my leaving my office, by a Jew merchant of this city—the same person whose conduct I had the necessity of representing to his Excellency in my report two weeks ago, when he threatened to maltreat me, and, had he not been prevented, would then have had recourse to personal violence towards me. (The various depositions respecting both outrages were placed in the hands of the Attorney-General, and are now in mine.)

“I observed several persons collected in the windows of the Commercial News-Rooms, as I was passing in Harbour Street. It did not occur to me at first, that I was the object of their attention: it proved, however, that the gentleman who meant to waylay me was watching there for me with his associates. When I was opposite Harty's

Tavern, I found my arms suddenly seized by some person behind me : the violence of the seizure nearly knocked me down. I released myself from the grasp of the person's left hand, and on turning round I received a blow in the chest, in the act of attempting to seize me by the collar. (My assailant was the Jew above-mentioned, and that Jew the landlord of the very place selected for my office by his Honour the Mayor, Mr. Hector Mitchell.) He immediately cried out on my turning round, ' You are the fellow I want—now I have you ! ' and used many other violent expressions of his determination to injure me, which I cannot call to mind. I abstained from striking him, having little difficulty in holding him at arm's length, feeling that he and his associates might have no other object in view than to embroil me in a street-quarrel, and perhaps eventually represent me as the aggressor. My friend, Dr. Chamberlaine, came opportunely to my assistance, and, seizing hold of my assailant, commanded him to keep the peace. He now turned on Dr. C., seized him by the collar, and commenced a furious assault on that gentleman. Dr. C. repeatedly called out, ' I am a magistrate, I command you to desist.' A gentleman of the name of Stevenson at length interfered, and, after a desperate resistance, the man was secured. But no police constable could anywhere be found to render assistance : at length Mr. Geoghegan,



the Deputy Provost Marshal, (a gentleman who, had he been present, would have put an end to this disgraceful scene long before,) ordered his bailiffs to take the man into custody and lodge him in the cage. I beg to state, in this last attack on me, as well as the former, I thought it more advisable by forbearance to uphold the character of my office, than to attempt to vindicate it, when thus insulted, by any violent means."

It is very evident, while such persons as the man whose conduct is described in the above statement, and especially the gentleman who created the disturbance in the office, are tolerated, if not abetted, in their outrages by members of the corporate body,—while the police are wholly under the control of that body, and the special magistrate is made dependent on them for the hovel that is made to serve the purpose of a court,—there is no chance of any special magistrate being able to discharge his duties. That officer, be he whom he may, if he only perform his duties honestly, must expect to be subjected to insult and annoyance of every kind; nay, more, if these outrages are to go on with impunity, he cannot consider his life in safety.

I have entered with great reluctance on these matters: most assuredly had they been only personal to myself, I never should have dreamt of giving them publicity. But these insults were

not offered to me as a private individual, but to my office; and such being the case, I think it is fitting it should be known, that it is through the sides of the special magistracy the Abolition measure is to be stabbed; and should it succumb to the violence that is now offered daily to it, that violence does not originate with the negroes, or the spirit of opposition, from which it proceeds, emanate from them.

I have now concluded this disagreeable subject, exhausted my own patience, and in all probability wearied yours. If I have spoken in any terms of harshness of the conduct of the colonists at the present crisis, it is more in sorrow than in anger.

The system they have had to do with was one which no class of men of any country could continue to pursue without oppression. That system originally placed no limits to the exercise of their power. Human nature has never yet in this world arrived at that perfectibility when power over our fellow-men could be safely trusted to it without control. The laws that sanctioned that dangerous latitude in our colonies, deserves the obloquy that is unjustly and solely fixed on the individuals who took advantage of their protection for the profitable pursuits of commerce or agriculture. The infamy of the traffic that springs out of the latter belongs to the laws: the misfortune of embarking in it, and the

folly of protracting the miserable existence of slavery, when its members were paralysed ; and its right hand, forgetful of its cunning, had neither the power to close its trembling fingers on its former gains, or to grasp the wages of its present fleeting privileges, now that its body is in the embrace of death :—that misfortune and that folly were the planter's. I am well aware it is not in human nature to encounter injury to property without repugnance, or even the fear of injury without a spirit of resistance even where resistance can only augment the evil that is apprehended. But I am also persuaded, the fears of the proprietors have greatly overrated the dangers of a complete and immediate emancipation.

The present system has not succeeded ; hitherto the opposition to it has been on the part of the white people. I fear the time will not be long before it is shown as strongly on the side of the apprentices. It will be in vain to attempt to patch up this worn-out system, at the instance of the advocates of the latter, with any new shreds of restricted liberty, or at the demand of the planters, with any of the old remnants of slavery. The best in this instance will be the boldest measure of improvement ; and what cannot be amended had better be abolished. That abolition and the payment of the compensation-money should be simultaneous ; and were both immediate,



and the per-capita award were substituted for that by valuation, a boon which Jamaica, in my opinion, has good grounds for laying claim to, the colonists would most willingly concede the immediate emancipation of their slaves—that is, their apprentices. The settlement of contending claims and disputed titles, it may be objected to this plan, would not admit of an immediate payment, but the adjustment of these might be deferred without involving those claims which are infeasible in the postponement. Even were it necessary to add another five millions to the twenty already granted for the compensation of the owners, in consideration of an immediate abolition, in the most precarious condition of the partial measure for that object at the present moment in Jamaica, I would say the safety of that colony—the avoidance of the probability of the evils of martial law—the rescuing the measure now in operation from the imputation of a failure, that will be hurtful to the cause of negro emancipation over the world—would be cheaply purchased.

As to the people of this country, separated from slavery, I can speak of them generally in no other terms than those which are inspired by kind and friendly feelings. To find them a kind-hearted, hospitable, and honourable class of men, it is only necessary to separate the interests of slavery from the ordinary sentiments of the pro-



prietors, and to discriminate between the planter in the presence of his negroes, when every intimation has its epithet, and every trivial remonstrance its invective,—and the private gentleman in society, where the rancour of colonial politics does not happen to interfere with the frankness and urbanity of his manners, and the fervid influence of the clime has suspended its dominion for the time over his temper, and its tyranny over the tone of his opinions. In a word, I freely confess, leaving the conduct that is influenced by slavery aside, I have not met in any country more estimable men than I have been acquainted with in Jamaica.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. R. M.

## APPENDIX.

THE circumstances which led to my resignation of the office of Special Magistrate were of a nature that I considered surrounded with too many difficulties, to enable me to discharge my duties with honesty to the intentions of the measure under which I acted. These circumstances I have unwillingly referred to; and in my anxiety to avoid all personal allusions, it is very possible I may have done injustice to the cause I profess to have at heart, by understating the difficulties that I have met with, and indeed those of every gentleman who has been similarly circumstanced, with regard to his duties and the opposition given to an honest and impartial discharge of them.

The three points on which I made a stand for the rights and newly established privileges of the apprentices, were these:—

First—In cases of valuation of the unexpired term of apprenticeship, an award conformable to the intrinsic value of the services appraised, and not the ideal value estimated by the injuries inflicted on slavery by any legislative enactment.

Secondly—In all cases of disputed title to the services of the negro, wherein there was reason to believe the apprentice had been illegally held in slavery, the duty of the Special Magistrate to satisfy himself that

he did not exercise his jurisdiction over freemen, as the new law limited his jurisdiction to apprentices who had been slaves.

Thirdly—In all misdemeanours, wherein resistance was apprehended on refusal of the negro to accompany his owner to a Magistrate, bearing in mind that on all estates there are constables, negroes belonging to the property, specially appointed by the stipendiary Magistrates, to apprehend and bring before him refractory Apprentices, while in Kingston—there is a resident Special Justice and police attached to his court, for all necessary purposes of apprehension;—the obvious intention of the Abolition Act to prevent all collision leading to violence between master and owner, and the right of the negro to all the judicial forms compatible with his present state of restricted freedom; to afford him protection from violence on the pretext of bringing him to justice; authorising the employment of warrants for his apprehension, instead of the arbitrary process, on every trivial disagreement, of dragging the Apprentice, with open violence, before the Magistrate.

The Corporation entertained very different notions of the remedial character of the new law. Its members not unfrequently favoured me with their exposition of it. One of them went so far as to trample on the authority of my office, and one of his partisans to assault me in the public streets.—I found the protection of the negro incompatible with my own: the power of the Corporation was paramount in Kingston to that of the Executive, as, in the imbecility of its arrogance, it dreamt that its privileges were tantamount to those of the British Parliament. From the gentlemen of the

legal profession, especially from the solicitors of Kingston, I invariably received the most prompt attention to any application I had to make for the assistance of their counsel, in cases of legal difficulty; and when I state that these services were rendered gratuitously, impartially, and at all times most willingly, I need hardly say, that the members of the legal profession there are men of liberality—I might add, even where liberality is prejudicial to their interests.

After a twelvemonth's struggle with the difficulties of my situation, I resigned my appointment, and in November, 1834, proceeded to America.

The approbation of my superiors was the only advantage I derived from my arduous employment. I had the satisfaction of receiving the following testimonials from them,—the last from the Earl of Mulgrave, since my arrival in England; and as the statements I have made are of a nature that render every corroboration of them desirable, I have reluctantly given publicity to documents that, under other circumstances, I might have considered only personal to myself.

---

From His Excellency the Marquis of Sligo.

The King's House,

My dear Sir,

Nov. 11th, 1834.

It is with much regret, that I have learned from you your unalterable determination to leave Jamaica, and give up your office of Special Justice. I can assure you that I shall deeply feel the loss of your services in this island, and shall be ready on all occasions to bear



testimony to the able and honest manner, in which you have, to your own detriment, conducted yourself since the administration of the affairs of this island has devolved on me. I feel fully your services, and grieve that they have been attended with so much inconvenience to yourself personally.

My dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

To Dr. MADDEN, &c. &c.

SLIGO.

---

From the Hon. Sir Joshua Rowe, Chief Justice.

Kingston, Nov. 14th, 1834.

My dear Sir,

I am very sorry to find you are determined to leave Jamaica, as I am sure the island will experience a great loss, by being deprived of your zeal and assiduity. Of your anxiety to discharge honestly and justly the difficult and responsible duties of a Special Magistrate, I can speak with confidence ; and I hope you may be successful in obtaining some consular appointment, as you possess talents and acquirements which might be employed in that capacity beneficially to the public service, and honourably to yourself.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

To Dr. MADDEN.

J. ROWE, C. J.

---

From his Honour the Attorney-General.

Spanish Town,

My dear Madden,

Nov. 14th, 1834.

Permit me to express to you how sincerely I regret your departure, the more particularly as I view it as a loss and injury to this island at the present moment. Yet I cannot feel at all surprised at your quitting Jamaica, for, since the commencement of the discharge of your duties, you have been subjected to a system of insult and annoyance the most harassing.

Under these vexations, however, you have done your duty so as to merit the sincere approbation of your Governor; and I will say for myself, that it never has been my lot to see difficult duties performed more efficiently, more honourably, or with more intelligence.

I cannot refrain from expressing to you how sincerely your leaving this island has caused unmixed regret to

Your faithful friend,

To Dr. MADDEN.

DOWELL O'REILLY.

---

From his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Vice-Regal Lodge, Dublin,

6th June, 1835.

My dear Sir,

Understanding that it would be agreeable to you to receive some testimonial from me, with regard to your conduct in Jamaica while I administered the govern-

ment in that island, I have great pleasure in stating that although, as the Act for the Abolition of Slavery had not come into operation before my departure for England, you had not, up to that time, had an opportunity of entering upon your duties as a Special Magistrate, yet I felt so satisfied of your qualifications for that office, and of your anxious desire to discharge its important functions with strict impartiality, that in fixing upon the different stations for the several Special Magistrates, I took care to appoint you to a district which I considered to be a very important one, and likely to afford an extensive field for the exercise of magisterial duties. I am happy to learn that the opinion I had formed of you was not disappointed, and that you are in possession of testimonials of the most favourable character from the principal authorities of the island, as to the manner in which those duties were performed. Believe me to be, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

MULGRAVE.

## A MADHOUSE CORRESPONDENT.

A very few days before my departure from Jamaica, I received a letter from an inmate of the Kingston Madhouse, complaining of being immured in that receptacle of the insane for certain political peccadilloes of a poetical kind, which had given offence to a high and mighty personage in Kingston; and the result of it was incarceration (in a madhouse) without judge or jury. On inquiry into the man's history, I found he had formerly been a planter of St. Anne's; subsequently had become a school-master, and latterly a song-writer. In the latter capacity, his zeal in the cause of negro emancipation made him a marked man; his ballads were adapted to negro tunes, and became very popular with the blacks; one of these songs, called 'Bonnie Lady Mulgrave,' was in the mouth for many weeks of every negro in Kingston. These songs were written with a great deal of eccentric talent, but there was no trace of insanity to be found either in his poetical or prose productions. This poor fellow wrote under the signature of the 'Fairy of the Hill.' There is difficulty in Jamaica in prosecuting a man for libel or seditious writings—Lecesse and Lescoffery to wit; therefore, the summary proceeding was adopted of banishing these men of colour from the island at a moment's notice. It



would have been equally difficult to have opposed the law to the political opinions of the Fairy of the Hill—it was a more simple and summary proceeding, to place him in a madhouse, and there I found him. The man assuredly, when I saw him, was no more insane than I was. I sent for the two principal keepers and the matron of the hospital: I asked their opinion of the man's sanity; they all declared that he was perfectly sane. I asked for the certificate of the doctors on which he had been admitted: I was told they had seen no such documents, that he had been committed to the madhouse by the order of "The Would-be-King" of Kingston, as the poor Fairy of the Hill, interrupting the matron, denominated the gentleman who had caused him to be shut up. In his letter to me, he stated the particulars of his arrest, and the reasons for it; that he had written against the apprenticeship system, and predicted its failure: if all the men in England, who committed the same offence, were consigned to Bedlam, a vast number of very intelligent men would be in lunatic asylums. This poor man concludes his letter by assuring me of his sanity of mind; and, by way of proving it, he encloses me a copy of a song of his—a recent composition. Now this, certainly, might be an equivocal proof of soundness of mind, before "a jury of physicians furiously disposed" against the insana studia of rhyme, as old Burton speaks of similar inquisitors. But though he will have it that all poets are mad, and that he who inflicts his verses on his friends is madder than his fellows, he by no means recommends that all mad men should be immured,—feeling, perhaps, that there would be too many domiciles to turn into Bed-

lams. I was not satisfied, however, with this doubtful evidence: I observed the man closely, and examined attentively a paper which he requested me to lay before Lord Mulgrave, on the substitution of a new system of remunerative labour instead of the apprenticeship—a paper full of valuable suggestions and most useful information: this document is now in the hands of a Member of Parliament. I have no hesitation in saying, the man, however strenuous he might be in the support of his political opinions, was of sound mind, though he might not be, on all occasions, of sober judgment. I lost no time in placing the particulars of his case before the Attorney-General, but my departure prevented me from hearing the result. I made up my mind to write no poetry while I was in Jamaica: from the period of my visit to this poor man, I had a salutary apprehension of a Kingston madhouse. “The following (says the poor Fairy of the Hill, in his letter to me,) is a song about liberty, that I hope soon to have occasion to sing in earnest.” In my opinion, the allusion in the second stanza, to the enjoyment of liberty in his youthful days, “On Scotia’s hills, sae blithe and free,” is beautifully expressed, and might make even a stranger wish for a better fate for the poor Fairy of the Hill than confinement in a madhouse.

## LADY LIBERTY.

A SONG, BY THE FAIRY OF THE HILL.

## I.

Oh, who comes smiling on thy car,  
Aurora say—so brilliantly?  
Who is this other morning-star,  
That dawns with day benignantly?  
“Who does not ken her bonnie smile?  
She long has pined in jeopardy;  
But now I bring to this fair isle  
Your own sweet lady—Liberty!”

## II.

Ah, well I ought to ken her smile,  
A mother's smile indeed to me;  
I ken'd it while a thoughtless child,  
On Scotia's hills sae blithe and free;  
Oft with her gamboll'd o'er the hills,  
Ere care approach'd with puberty;  
And now she comes to sunny isles,  
Our own sweet lady—Liberty!

## III.

We'll lead her o'er St. Anna's grove,  
Thro' fairy dells of spicy trees—  
The bonny dame! our queen of love,  
Her weary wings at length shall ease:  
Enthroned on yon Blue Mountain peak,  
View Grandè “rolling rapidly;”  
On Buxton hills the shrine we'll seek  
Of our sweet lady—Liberty!

## IV.

All hail! all hail! auspicious morn,  
 That brings our lady o'er the sea;  
 No more I'll thole the tyrant scorn!  
 We'll crush the chains of slavery!  
 We swear it by the God of War,  
 We swear our purpose siccarly!  
 And no one shall restrain the car  
 Of lovely lady Liberty!

## CHORUS.

Hark, now her song Jamaica sings,  
 O'er hill and dale, o'er bower and tree;  
 We consecrate the land of springs  
 To lovely lady Liberty.      A. M.L.

## YELLOW FEVER.

Being desirous of ascertaining the opinions of the medical practitioners here, on the question of contagion, in the plague of the West Indies—the yellow fever, I made various inquiries on the subject; and in no instance have I found the opinion of its being contagious (in the ordinary sense of the word) entertained.

From some papers on the subject of yellow fever, shown me by Dr. M'Grath, an army surgeon, who has been long established in this island, and whose opinions on any subject I think deserving of the very highest respect, I was induced to address the following letter to him, after the perusal of his excellent papers on this disease:—



" TO DR. M'GRATH.

" My dear Sir,

" I have read two of your reports, with all the attention I could give them—those marked Nos. 1 and 2. That which is marked No. 3 appears to have been written by some penman skilled in hieroglyphics; and though I have dwelt for some time in the country of the Pharaohs, I have not been able to make out either head or tail of a single letter. The other papers were fortunately less illegible. I have seen no account of this disease in which the result of close observation of its phenomena is conveyed in language so intelligible and succinct. Nevertheless, there are points in the treatment, the principle and indications of which I cannot comprehend; and would therefore desire to know whether longer experience has modified or confirmed your opinion of the advantage of such remedies as the use of the shower-bath,—the exhibition of emetics,—the dependence solely on the hot bath, for the encouragement or promotion of re-action,—the preference of general blood-letting, over topical bleeding,—the use of purgatives, beyond the simple removal of obstruction in the bowels:—and, lastly, the contraindication to the diffusible stimuli, at the onset of the disease, on which you seem to lay so much stress?

" On these matters, if your leisure allowed, I would be very thankful to receive further information. I would also beg to ask you, convinced as you are of the non-contagious nature of this disease, do you think yellow fever, under any unfavourable circumstances to health, such as ill-ventilated rooms, a crowded ward of an hospital, or a state of squalor incidental to

extreme distress, capable of propagating itself by contagion or infection?

“Your description of the disease certainly appears to me the most graphic I have seen. But what experience, you will say, have I had of the disorder, to entitle me to form any opinion of the merits of that description? The disease has not prevailed, as an epidemic, in Jamaica, since my arrival; and no disease, called by the name of yellow fever, exists, as you are aware, in the Levant. But a marsh fever, of a bilious kind, remittent in its type, and not inflammatory, but characterized by great nervous irritability, does exist in one of the eastern suburbs of Alexandria, and is called by the Arabs the date-tree fever, from the circumstance of the fever, at certain seasons, occurring whenever a village is surrounded by groves of date-trees. It prevails, likewise, in Damietta, in the neighbourhood of the rice-grounds, which are kept inundated during the growth of the plant; and this fever is called by the Levantine doctors, the pernicious fever (*febre perniciosa*), and, by us, bilious remittent fever, but in a form greatly aggravated by local circumstances. This fever is generally fatal from the seventh to the ninth day: it is ushered in with shiverings, vomiting, and great engagement either of the head or stomach, but seldom both these extreme symptoms at the same time. I have seen a great deal of this fever, and have been often exceedingly puzzled about it; sometimes from the black sordes about the teeth and lips, and other similar symptoms, having been inclined to treat it as typhus, or putrid fever. I am inclined to think that, if this was not the true yellow fever of the West Indies, it was a modification of it, or, in other

words, that bilious remittent fever is only a milder form of yellow fever.

" But the circumstance which principally induced me to write to you on the subject was, the extraordinary coincidence of your description of the symptoms and appearances of yellow fever, with that of those phenomena in plague, some account of which I have formerly given in 'Travels in the East.' I refer to that account with the hope of leading your attention to this subject, for the purpose of endeavouring to ascertain in what particulars those violent disorders resemble each other, and whether in both, the vital powers are overwhelmed by the agency of a similar miasma, or are affected by those of a different nature in a similar manner.

" In my account of the plague, I endeavoured to show that the disease was one not of an inflammatory but of an asthenic congestive kind; that the miasma (whatever its nature might be) acted as a direct poison on the nervous system; that the circulation was overpowered by its influence; and that congestion was the consequence of that depression of the nervous energy. The indication I contended was the restoration of that influence, and the removal of that congestion. Subsequent experience, or, at least, reflection, has put it strongly into my mind, that in all those violent forms of disease which are either epidemic or contagious, such as plague, cholera, yellow fever, and typhus gravior, where the vital powers are suddenly depressed, and the type of the disease is not inflammatory, the shock has been given by a specific poison (call it what sort of miasma we please, arising from the decomposition of animal or vegetable matter) to

the nervous system : and it is not by sudden impressions on the vascular system that salutary effects are to be produced ; I mean, it is not by extracting blood, except in such a moderate way as to relieve congestion, that the powers of life are to be rallied, or nature fitted to struggle with the miasma that oppresses it. With these sentiments you may imagine with what interest I read your remarks on the proximate cause of this disease. Instead of ascribing it, you say, to a general phlogistic diathesis, or to local inflammatory action, you are inclined to attribute the proximate cause of fever to disordered nervous action, and are of opinion that the poison accumulated in the body acts on the brain or medulla spinalis, which you consider the principal seat or source of life in the animal machine.

“ So far, Doctor, your experience of a disease, one of the most formidable of all others, and mine of one which probably stands next to it in point of virulence, have certainly traits of affinity which seem to me worthy of examining into. The symptoms, you say, of yellow fever are—nausea ; pain in the forehead, loins, and limbs ; and pain in the epigastrium ; despondency and great prostration ; thirst generally ardent ; countenance of a dull red, resembling that of a drunken man ; the eyes suffused and watery, the temperature increased, but the heat evanescent ; the skin often moist, but constricted ; the tongue sometimes clean throughout the disease, but commonly covered in the progress of the fever with a thin yellow or brown sordes, but seldom dry ; pulse from 90 to 110, sometimes full and soft, but in general obscure, and not unfrequently liquid ; then a remission always within thirty-six hours ; subsequently



feverishness, great restlessness and coma, vomiting of a sour, bitter ropy fluid, and increased pain about the epigastrium; yellowness of skin, hands purplish and cold, but great heat about the epigastrium; a cadaverous smell from the body; great thirst; dark hæmorrhage from the gums; the fluid from the stomach streaked, and finally like coffee-grounds; delirium mild, and from which the patient could be easily roused; patches of purple over the body; hiccup; paralysis of the muscles of deglutition; small boils occasionally of the nature of carbuncles, about the elbows; coldness of extremities; countenance a sallow bloated withered look; either increased coma, or the senses retained to the last, many requiring by force to be kept in bed; great difficulty of breathing, and eventually death.

“Now, do me the favour to put down this letter, and turn, as Abernethy would say, to page 251 of my book, vol. i. and, if you do not find, with few exceptions, those identical symptoms, and some even expressed in the same words, in the description I have attempted to give of plague, I am greatly mistaken. If the symptoms of the two diseases, in many important respects, prove similar, the treatment must be so likewise, with the exception of the greater necessity that exists in yellow fever, of obviating, at the onset, any tendency to determination to the brain. With this view of the disorders in question, I have ventured to make those queries I have addressed to you at the beginning of this letter.

“ Yours, my dear Sir,

“ Very truly,

“ R. R. M.”

The Doctor was labouring, at the time he received this letter, under an attack of letter-writing hatred, and preferred giving me the following oral answers to some of my queries:—

Query—Did you ever see bilious remittent fever merge into yellow?

Answer—They are both types of one disease. I have seen the former become what is called yellow fever, and again become remittent towards the termination of the disease, when yellow fever usually proves most fatal.

Query—Do you consider yellow fever a contagious disease?

Answer—I believe it is not contagious.

Query—Do you believe it may ever become so by local circumstances, of an unfavourable nature to the health of those about the sick?

Answer—An ill-ventilated room, or a crowded ship, and want of cleanliness, for any length of time, I have no doubt might render it contagious.

Query—Are women less subject to it than men, or the aged than the young?

Answer—Women, on account of their more temperate habits and less frequent exposure to the sun, are much less subject to it than men: young people, and new comers, are much more susceptible of the disease than the aged, and the accustomed to the climate.

Query—What time does it prevail? and how is it influenced by climate?

Answer—From July to September, in the hottest months, it mostly prevails; but straggling cases of yellow fever are always to be found in Jamaica except in the mountainous districts, where at a certain elevation it is

wholly unknown. (I do not believe yellow fever has been ever known to have occurred in Jamaica at the height of 3000 feet above the level of the sea.) The prevalence or disappearance of the disease appears to be wholly regulated by the range of the thermometer. The negroes are exempt from it, and in this country I never saw one labouring under it.

Shortly after this communication, Dr. M'Grath took me to visit a patient labouring under this disease. His head, breast, and neck, were literally as yellow as a guinea. This gentleman was recovering from the disease.—I observed a black scaly patch over the upper lip: the same had been noticed elsewhere—one of the first symptoms of the dissolution of the blood: he had had hæmorrhage from the nose, another unfavourable symptom, but no black vomit. The leading symptom at the commencement, which, according to Dr. M'Grath, distinguishes this disease from ordinary fever, is the deep-seated excessive pain in the bottom of the orbits, which is invariably complained of. The patient had been bled from the arm once to twenty ounces; a blister was placed over the stomach, and small doses of *calomel and cayenne pepper*\* had been administered every two hours when the remission took place: during one of these periods a change for the worse was ushered in with the usual treacherous appearance of quietude, followed by listlessness and extreme depression, though accompanied with that sort of nervous irritability which I am pretty sure I have

\* I have been informed by a very intelligent gentleman who has been in the East Indies a good deal, that he has known the oil of capsicum administered as a purgative with extraordinary good effects in many cases.

REPORT

ON MORE THAN ONE CASE OF ...  
inflammation. The ...  
Dr. McLean ...  
withstanding it ...  
some ...  
again ...  
the ...  
was the ...  
...  
of the ...  
been ...  
all ...  
...  
...  
...  
...



## SLAVERY IN AMERICA.

There is a society in America, called the Colonization Society, to which a great many really benevolent and humane people belong. The honesty of their philanthropy I have frequently heard called in question, but I have no misgivings of the sincerity of their opinions: it is only their judgment I doubt the depth of. The Society is backed by all the influence of the slave-holders of the South—I mean by the crafty wealthy proprietors, and is only opposed by the pig-headed portion of that body, who see fearful dangers for the system of slavery in the measures pursued by the Society, that may be likely to effect “the property” of their posterity in three or four hundred years to come! But the Southern members, of any intelligence, have no such fears; they well know that millions are not perceptibly diminished by the annual exportation of dozens.\* At Baltimore I was requested to attend one of the Colonization Society meetings, by a gentleman at the same hotel at which I stopped. I gave some reasons for declining to attend, which were not satisfactory: I was pressed to state my real objections to

\* On this subject, and indeed on every other connected with slavery in America, Mr. Abdy, in his recent work, has left nothing unsaid; and what he has said, so fully accords with my own experience, that I find many of his accounts stated very nearly in similar terms to those I had intended for publication; and I feel the less reluctance in suppressing them from the sincere regret I would feel to have to speak in any other terms than those of commendation of a country where there is so much to admire.

this benevolent society,—I had only two, and I endeavoured to describe them as intelligibly as I could. The first was, that I considered the scheme was impracticable; and the second, that it originated with men who knew that it was so. In Virginia I would probably have been convinced I was in error, by a manual application to my nasal or visual organs. But in Baltimore, where the people trust more to argument than an assault, when they fall in with an Abolitionist, a difference of opinion on this subject does not necessarily lead to bloodshed. The advocate of the Colonization Society, in the present instance, merely intimated to me, in the most polite way imaginable, that I was perfectly ignorant of what I was talking about, and that if I was not enamoured of my ignorance, I would go to the meeting in order to be enlightened. I confessed my ignorance was insuperable, and therefore saw no utility in deferring a long journey for the purpose of attending the meeting in question. My colonization friend having addressed himself first to my humanity without effect, secondly to my reason, with as little advantage, now made a lunge at the weak side of an old countryman,—he appealed to my stomach. There was a dinner to be of the friends of the Society—he would procure me an invitation—there would be some excellent speeches, and one gentleman had composed a poem on the subject of Liberia and Colonization. These were temptations indeed,—dinner, speeches, and a poem with the dessert; what mortal man from the old country could withstand them? To go, or not to go, that was the question; the flesh was weak, but the spirit was unwilling; and the suggestion of the

spirit eventually triumphed over the yearnings of the former. I thought, however, I could not do less than compose a song for the occasion, so I gathered myself up in a corner of the coffee-room, and I indited the following laudatory lines to the appropriate air of "Hail! Columbia, happy land!"

## I.

Hail! hail! Columbia, happy land!  
The native land of liberty!  
The stranger's home from every strand  
Where man is held in slavery!

## II.

Well may thy sons, Columbia, boast  
Their glorious charter, and proclaim  
That Nature's law to all is just,  
The equal rights of all the same.

## III.

Columbia's code shares these with all—  
It matters not for sect or clime:—  
Complexion—true, may sanction thrall,  
But colour, then, supposes crime.

## IV.

Oh, hail! Columbia, happy land!  
The cradle land of liberty!  
Where none but negroes bear the brand,  
Or feel the lash of slavery.

## V.

But negro limbs were made for chains,—  
Their skin denotes that Nature marred  
The outcasts thus, to till our plains,  
And toil for life, without reward.

## VI.

Then let our glorious anthem peal!  
And drown—" *Britannia rules the waves !*"  
Strike up the song, that men can feel—  
" *Columbia rules—two million slaves !*"

## VII.

Long live the bard who calls the South  
" The land of liberty !"—sweet word !  
Long may it be in every mouth !  
And soon in every heart be stored.

## VIII.

God save the rights of all our race !  
God speed the car of liberty !  
And trample down oppression base,  
In every guise of tyranny !

THE END.



